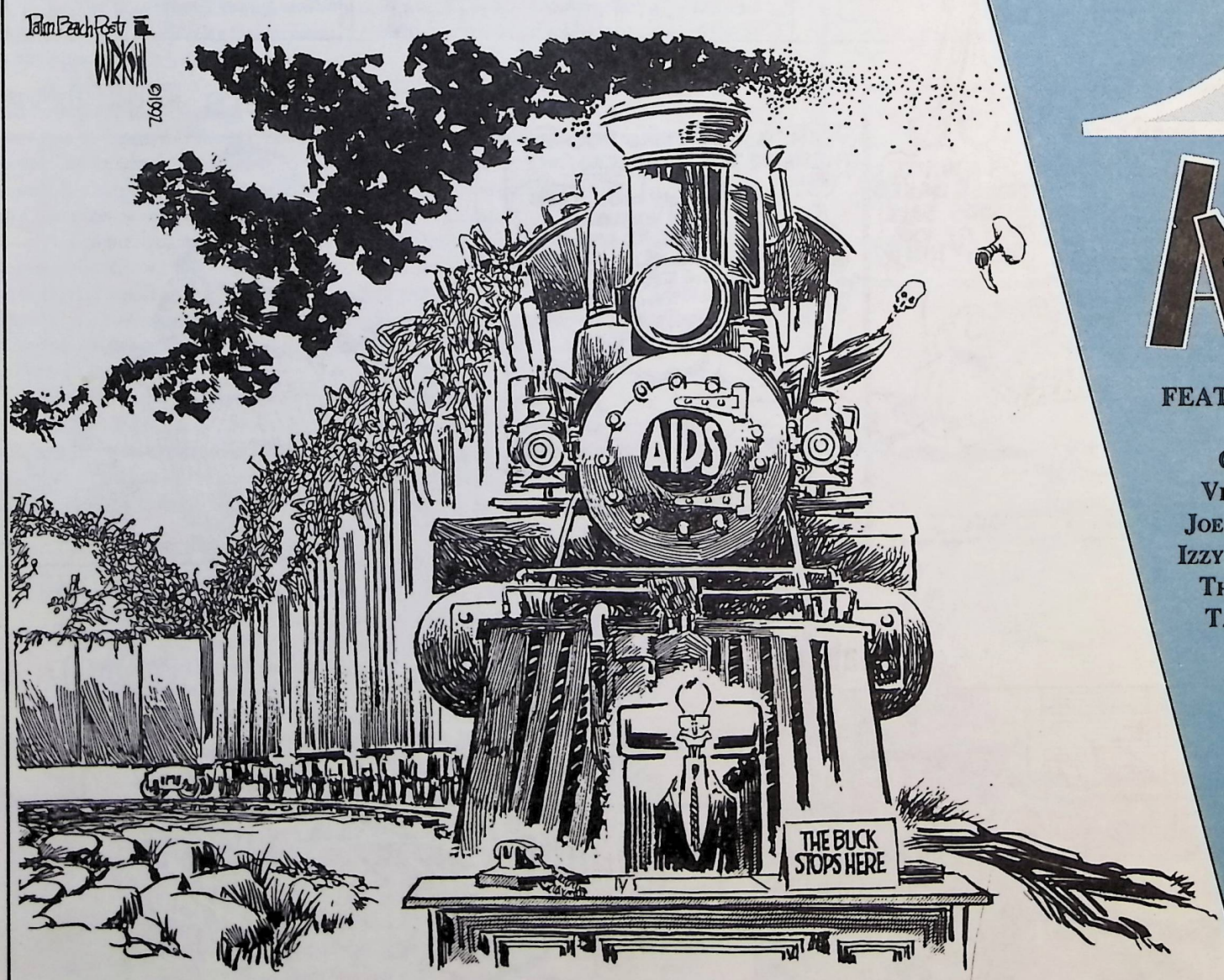
EPISODE #77
December 10, 1992

The Valley COMIC NEWS

STORIES:
SEASONINGS
GREAT X-PECTATIONS
MEANWHILE, BACK AT THE INTERREGNUM
MISC. & MATCH
BEYOND POLITIX
OTHER STUFF



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LOCAL HEROES

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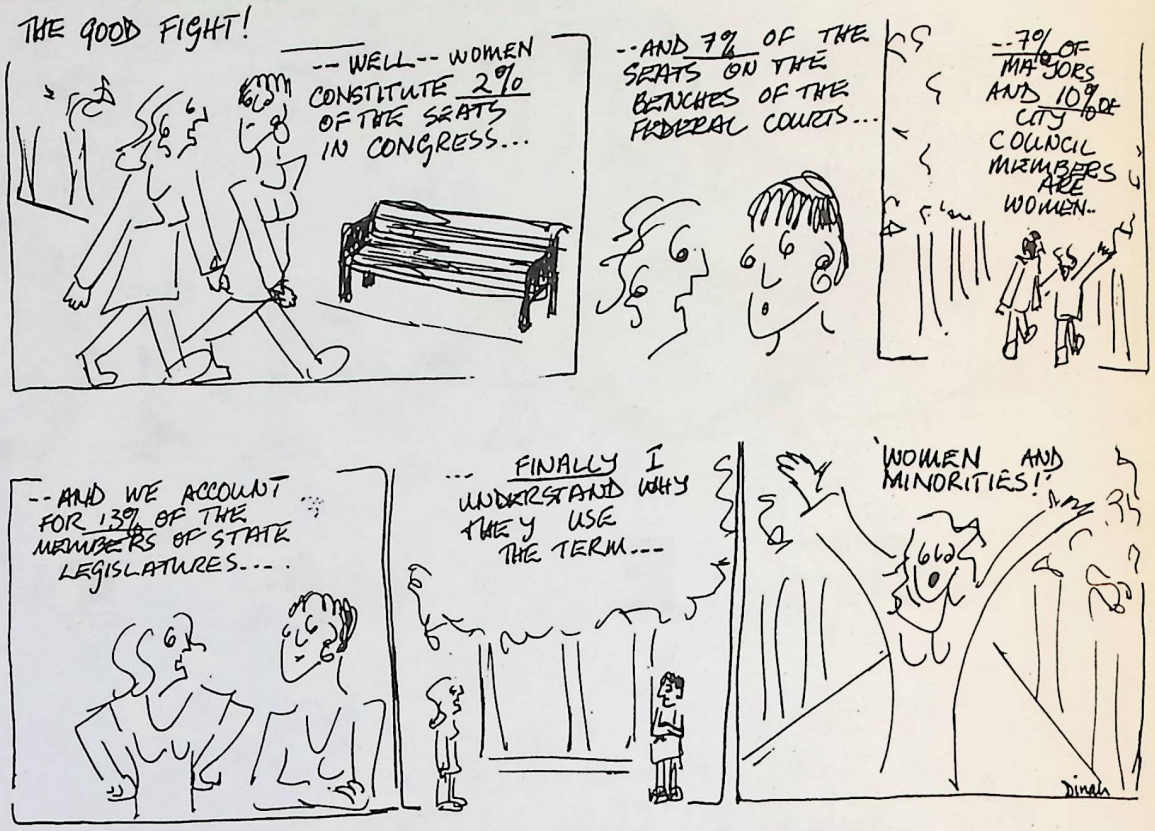
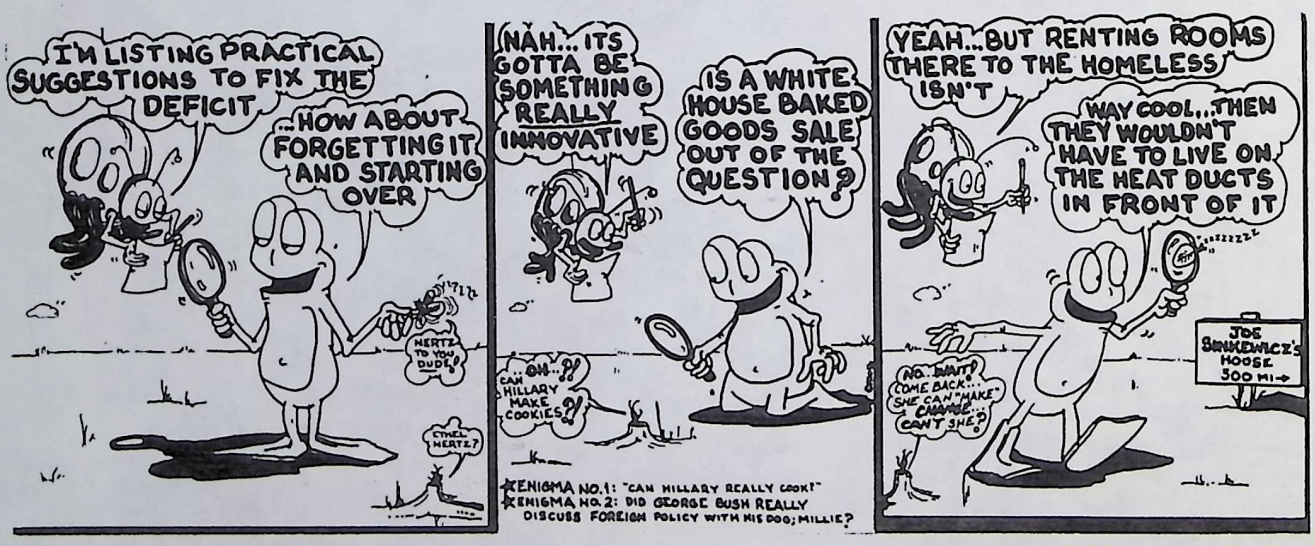
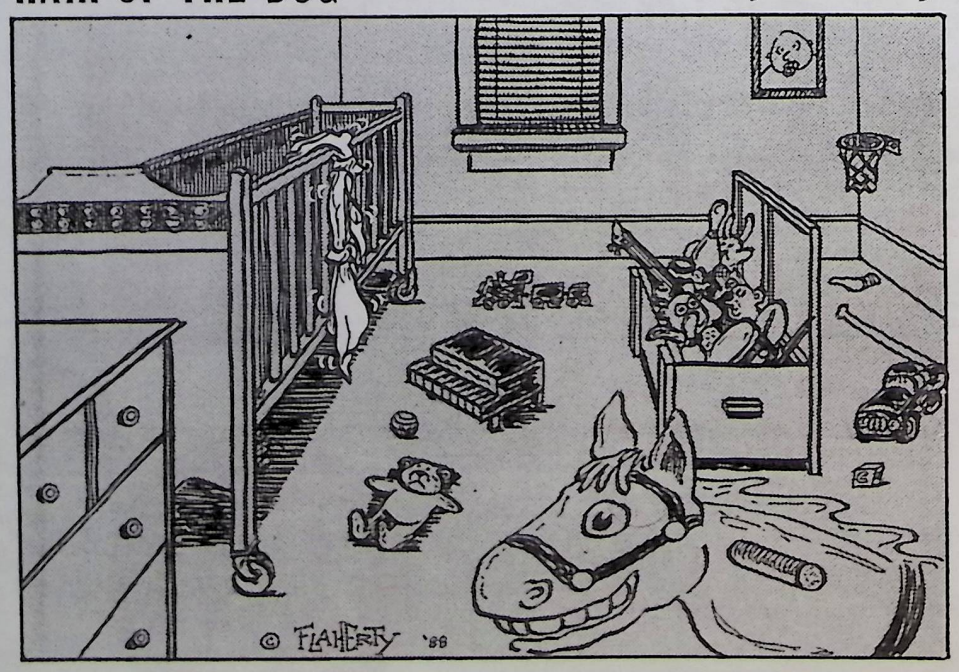


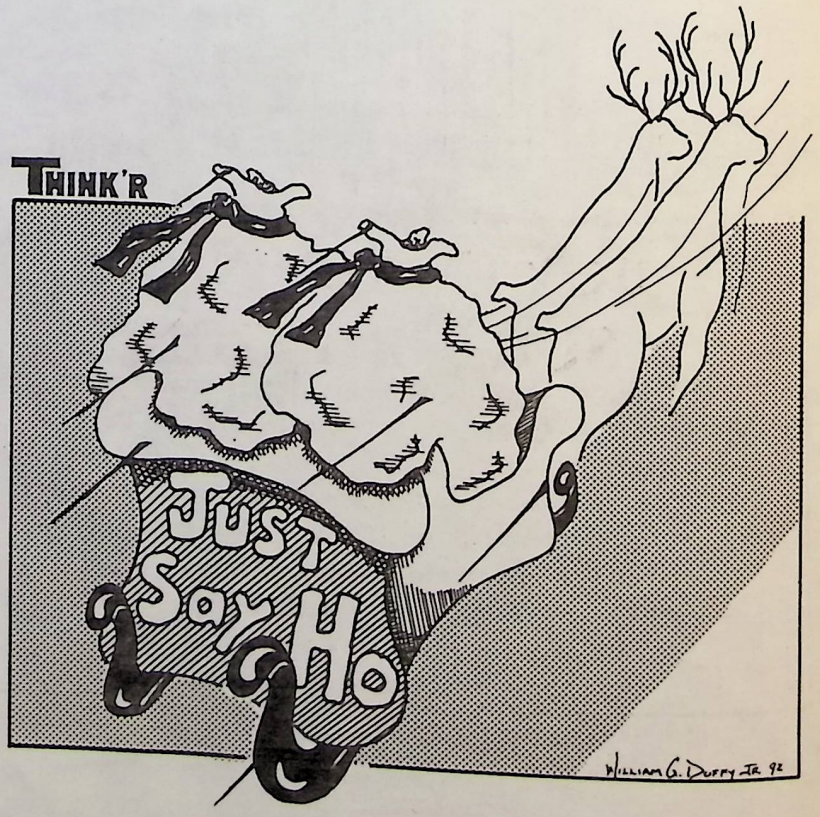
dog feathers by Giles Hopkins



HORACE HAD ALL THE ANSWERS.

HAIR OF THE DOG by Flaherty





PAGE THREE

by Mike Chrisman

Lately, hour by languid hour, day by dolorous day, week by lachrymose week, it has become more and more clear that I will not get the call to host Saturday Night Live. At least not soon.

This is a disappointment to me. Every time a host walks out on that Saturday Night stage, it rankles, because it's so *obvious* that they're nervous, and their opening bits are always straight from the lame-mobile, and they clearly are just not prepared to galvanize ten million dozing Americans. Unless it's Steve Martin. Of course; he's *Steve Martin*. But some of these bozos — I don't know where they get them. I know I could be *that* good; I mean, I've been ready to do this for *years*. I'm sure some of you feel the same way. About you, I mean; not me.

Remember a few seasons back when they ran a contest to pick a host from the general public? I would have won that for sure, except I wasn't quite ready to enter yet. Since then I've developed a lot more confidence though, from appearing in public, and generally being an entertaining *bon vivant* throughout a two-county area...and at this point I'd be a shoo-in. I mean, people'd be saying, "Why haven't we seen *this* guy before?" So I hope they run that contest again pretty quickly.

And then when I started working at this newspaper, I thought, "Surely, now that I'm the editor of *The Valley Comic News*, a call from Lorne Michaels is imminent. I'll stay by the phone."

But it's been over a year, and he still hasn't called, and I'm thinking I've got to start being realistic about this. I mean, sure, there's a lot of talented people out there. But what makes it possible for one person to become famous while another equally talented person has to stay home pricing Misses and Ladies Wear at K-Mart? If my research is correct, it's because the famous person had some dirt on the person who hired them. That's why I'm considering retaining a detective to follow Lorne Michaels around.

I'm pretty sure Lorne Michaels is one of those people who's got skeletons in his closet up the wazoo. If I can find out something really seedy about him, he's bound to give me a job so I won't let the entire entertainment world know what it is. On the other hand, if he *doesn't* have anything totally embarrassing to hide, he sure wouldn't want the gossip-loving public to know *that* either — how can you be a big-shot cultural elite honcho without any *dirt* in the picture?

It just can't help at contract time.

So I'll probably have to get a really clever detective for this job — somebody who's super excellent at either finding things out or *not* finding things out. Kind of a switch-hitter. Then I'll just sit back and anticipate how much hosting Saturday Night Live is going to jump-start my career. With this sure-fire plan, I think I can start counting the hours until the call comes.

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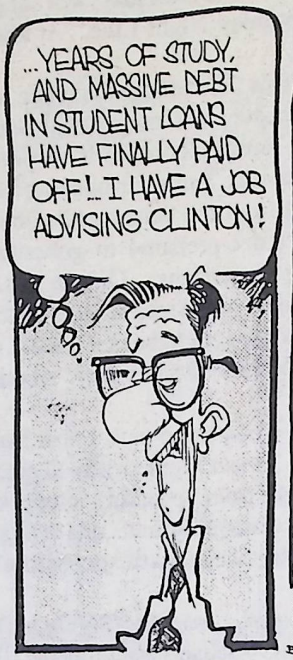

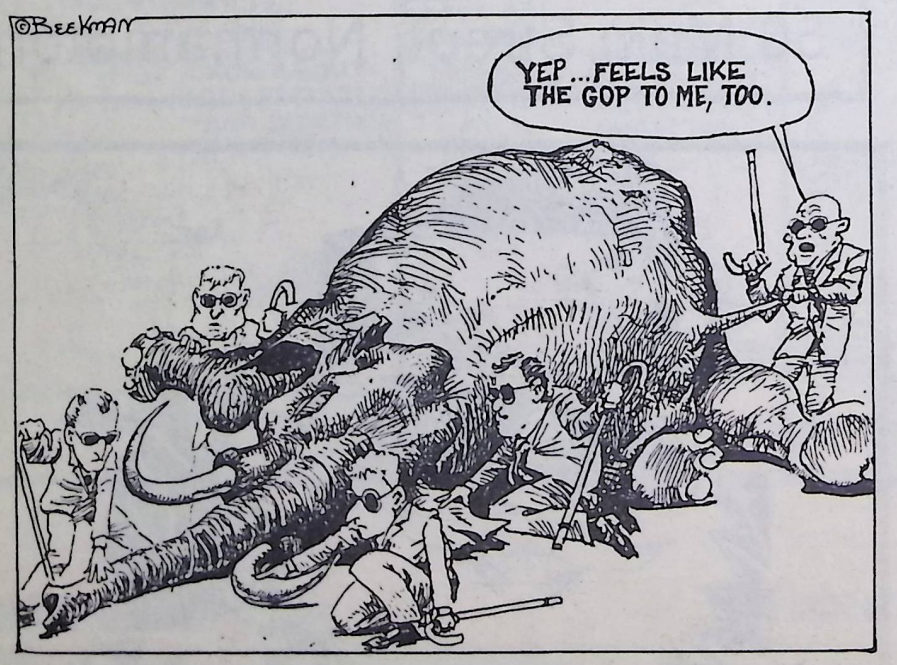

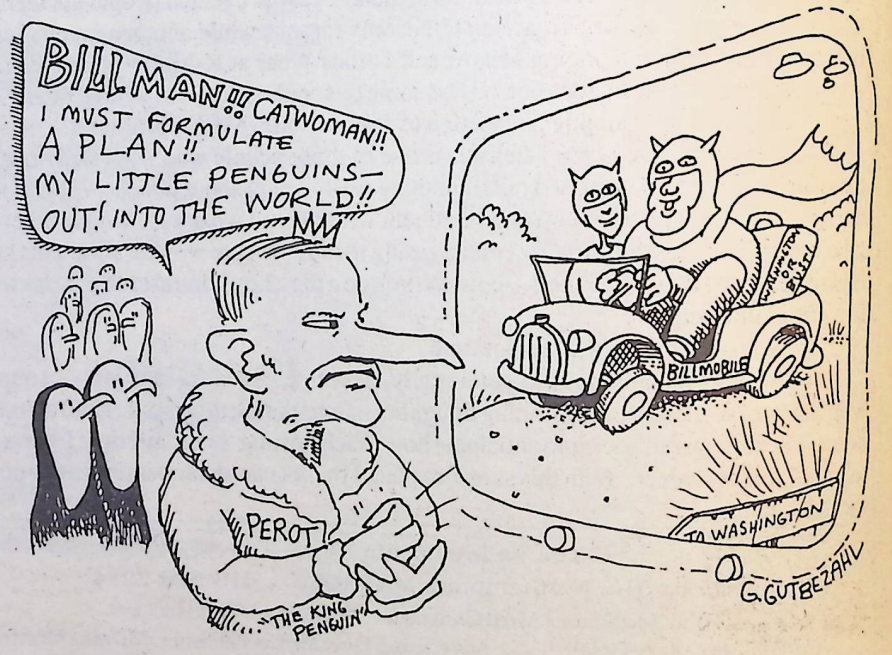

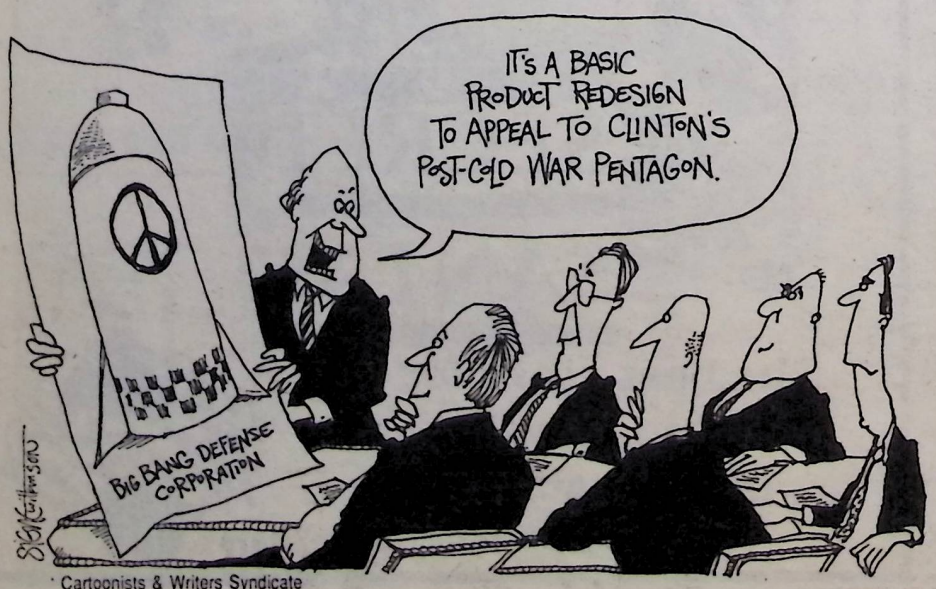

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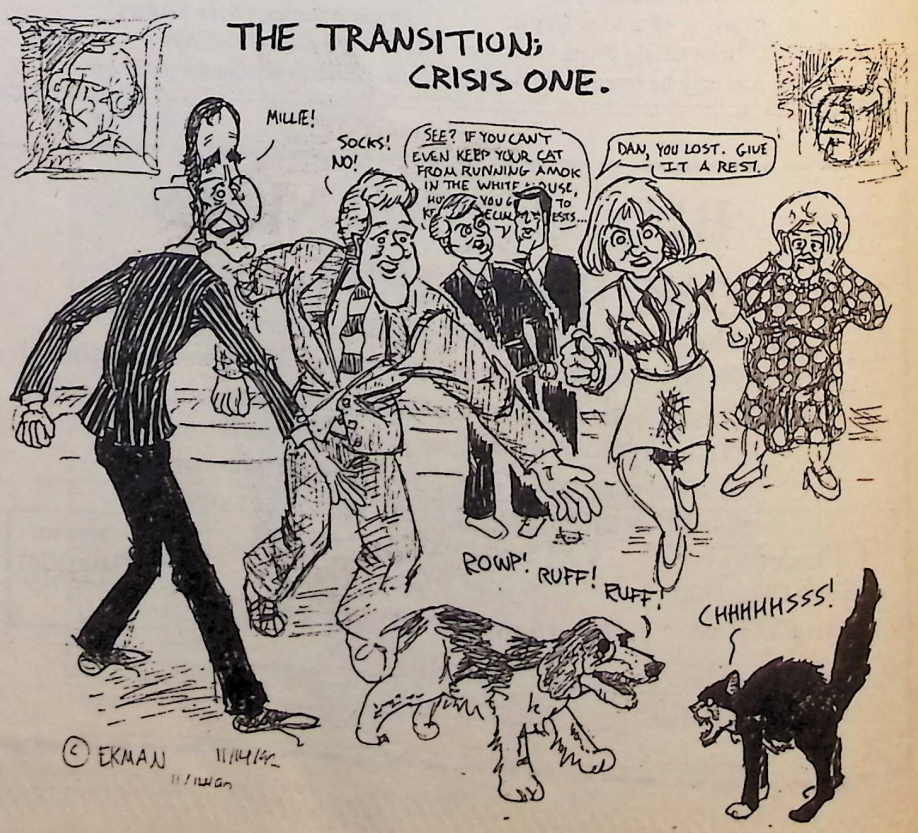

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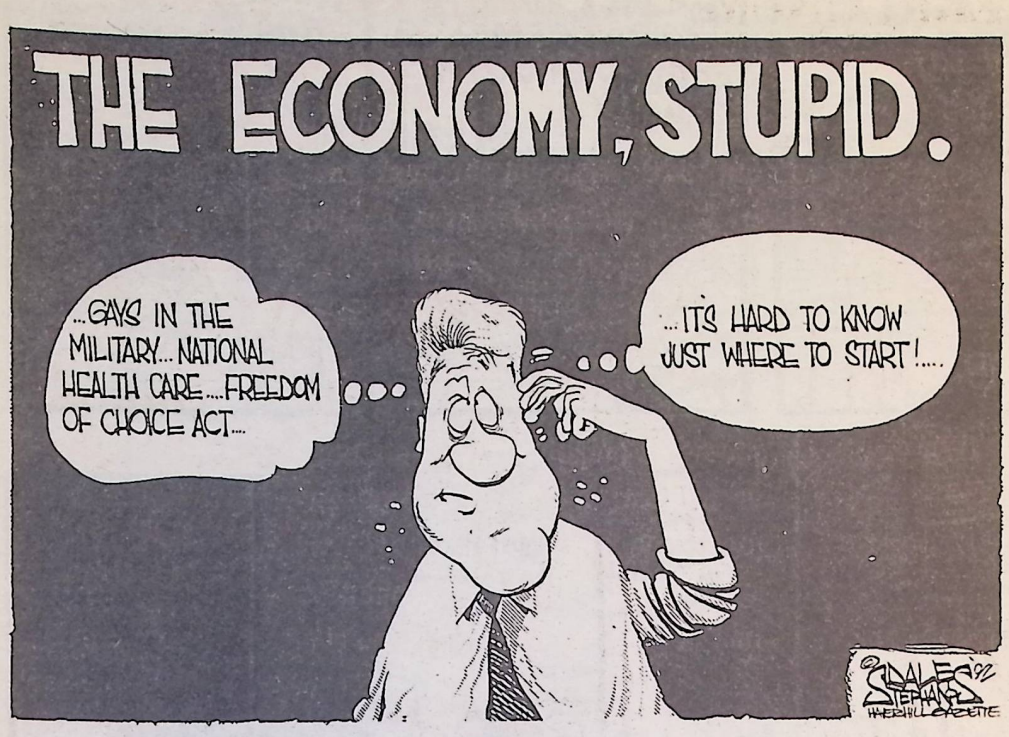

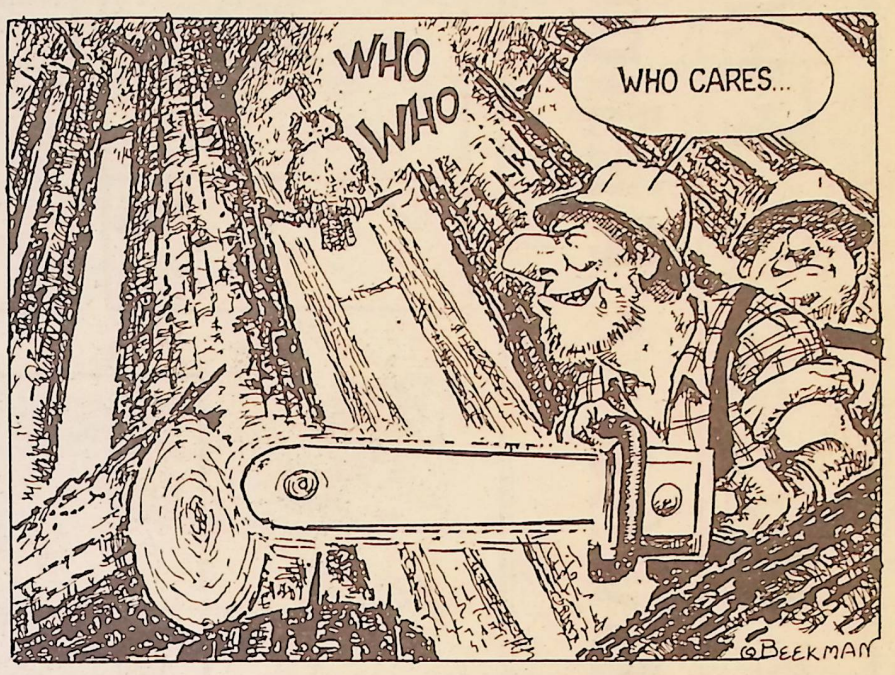

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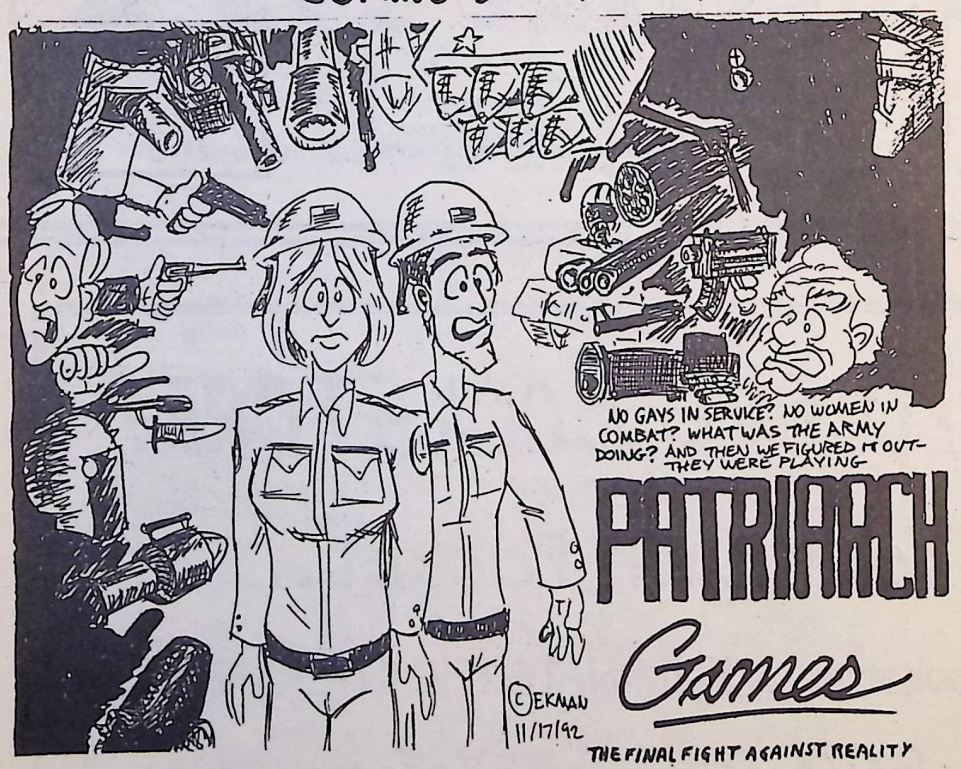

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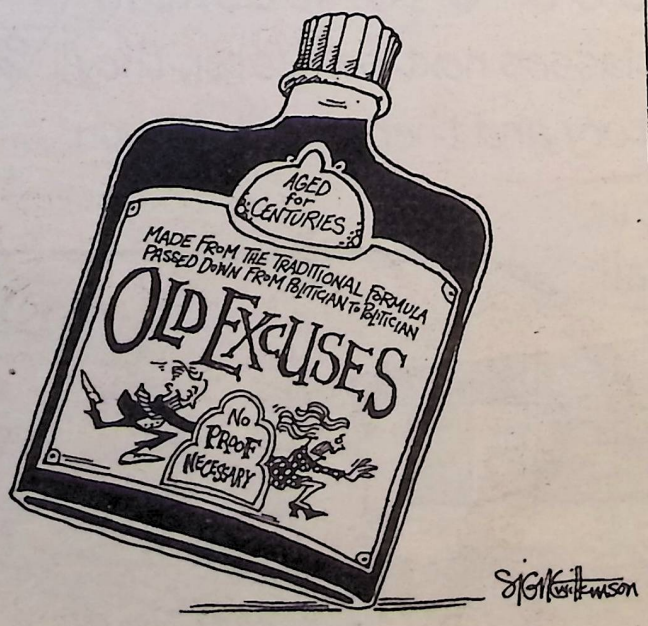

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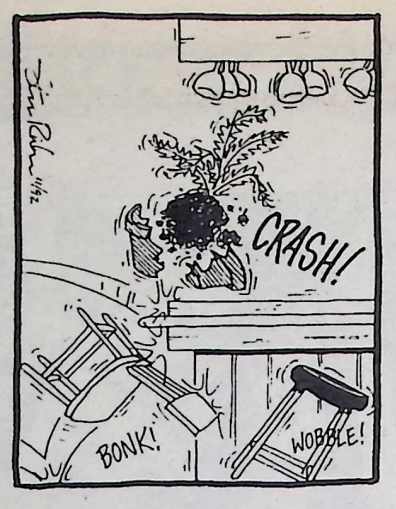
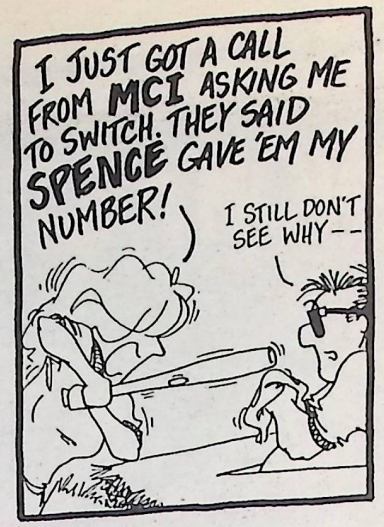
THE BRASS & FERN
By Steve Riehm





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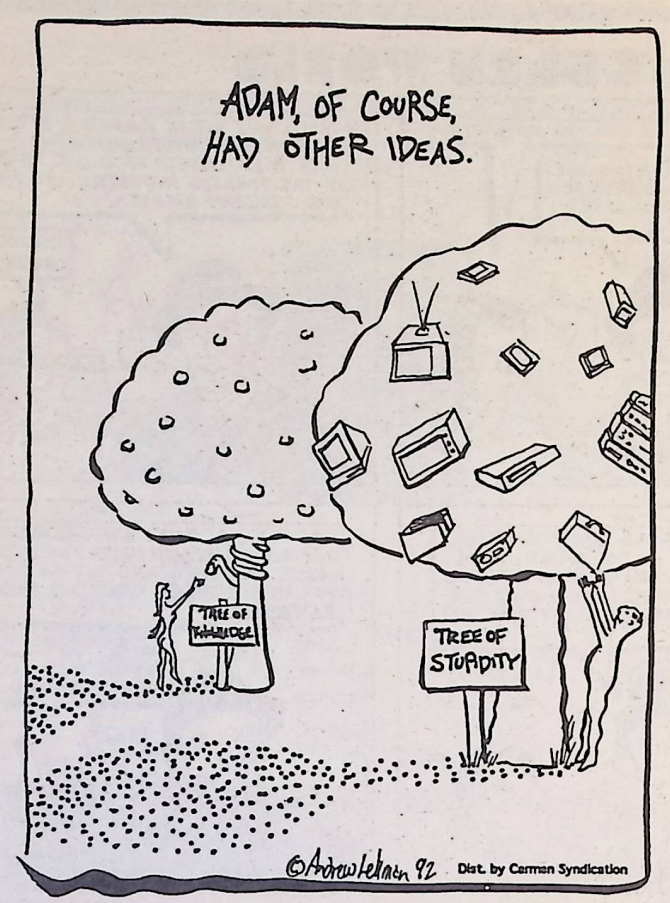

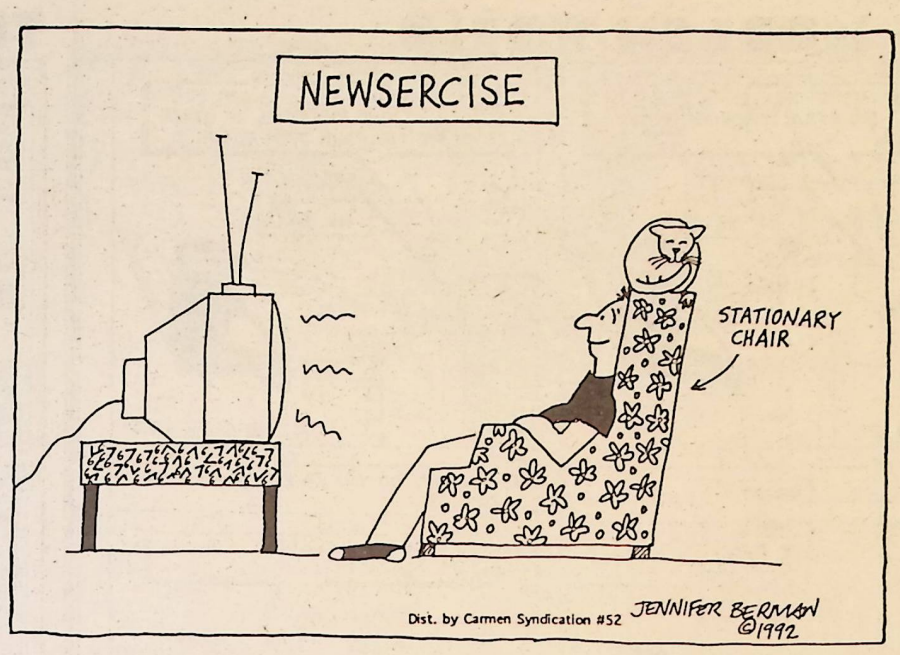

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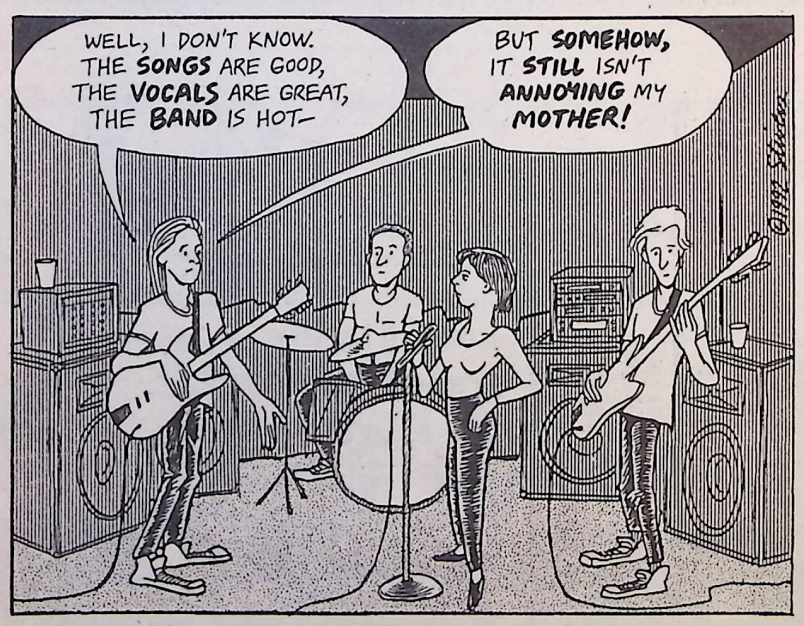

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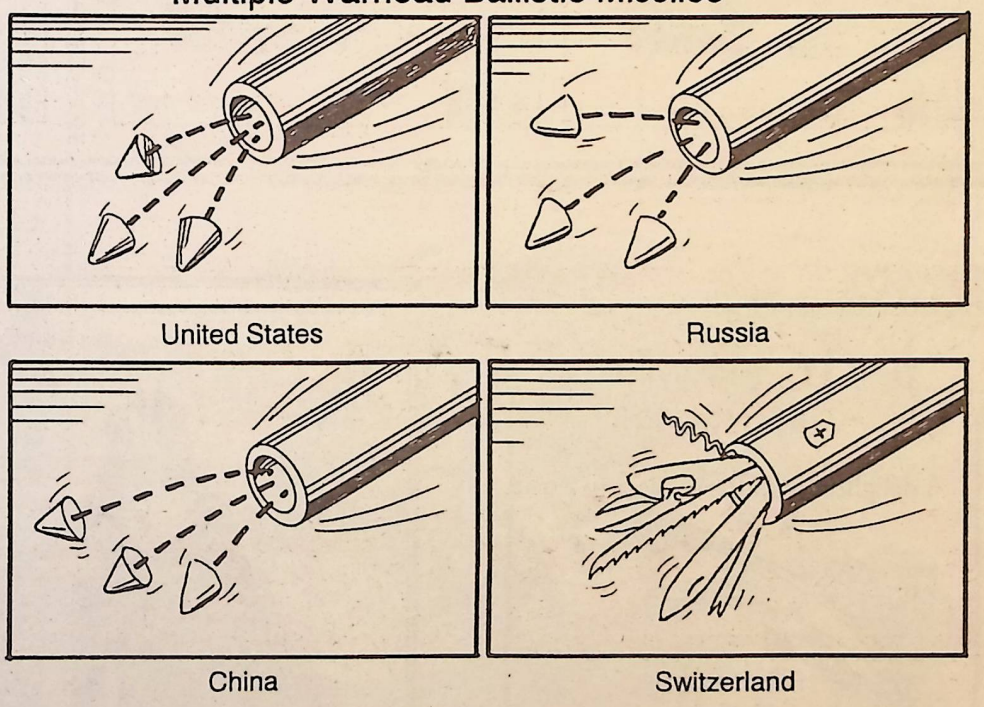

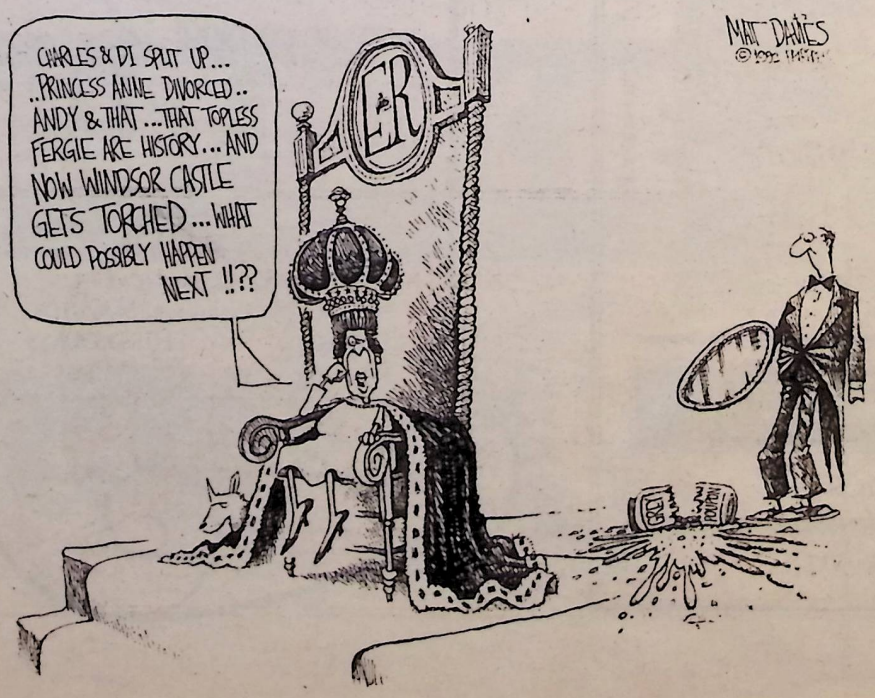

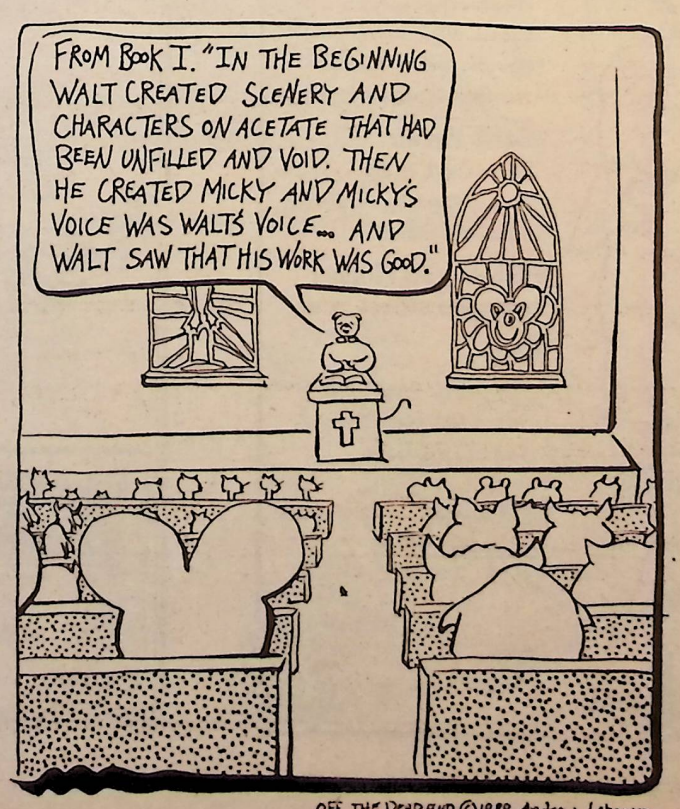

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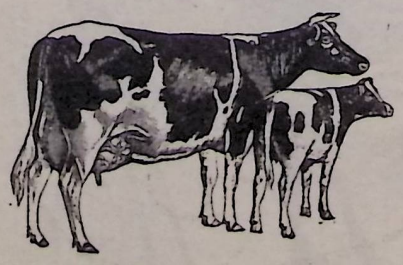

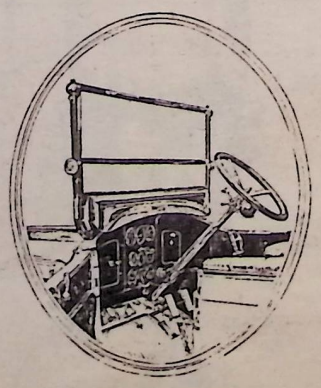

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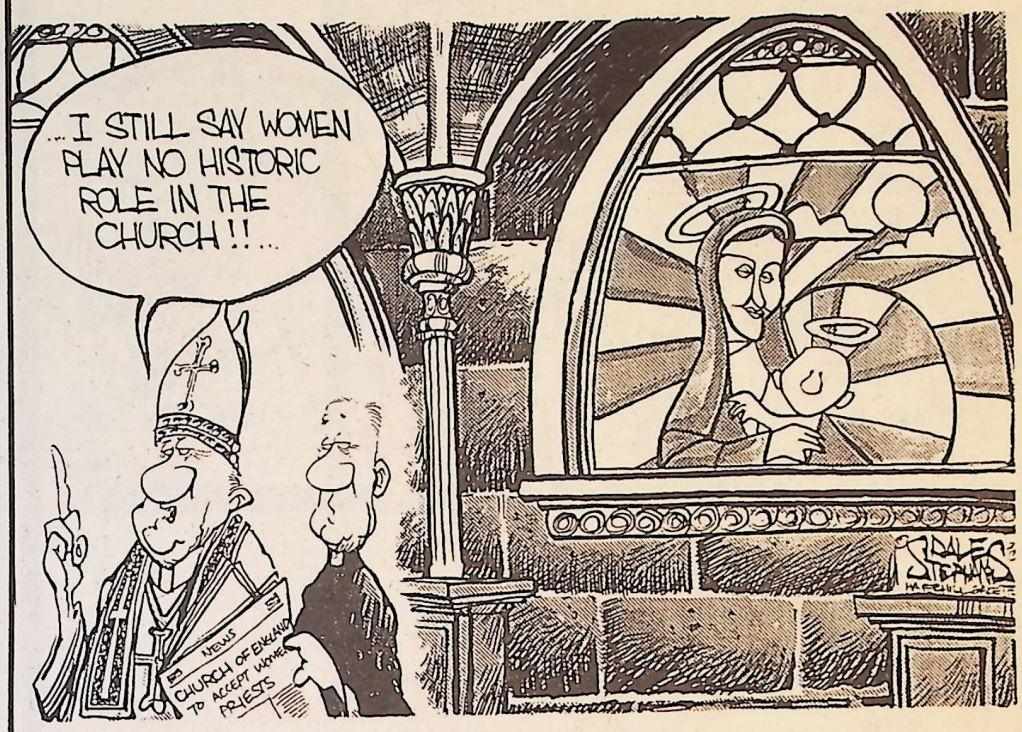

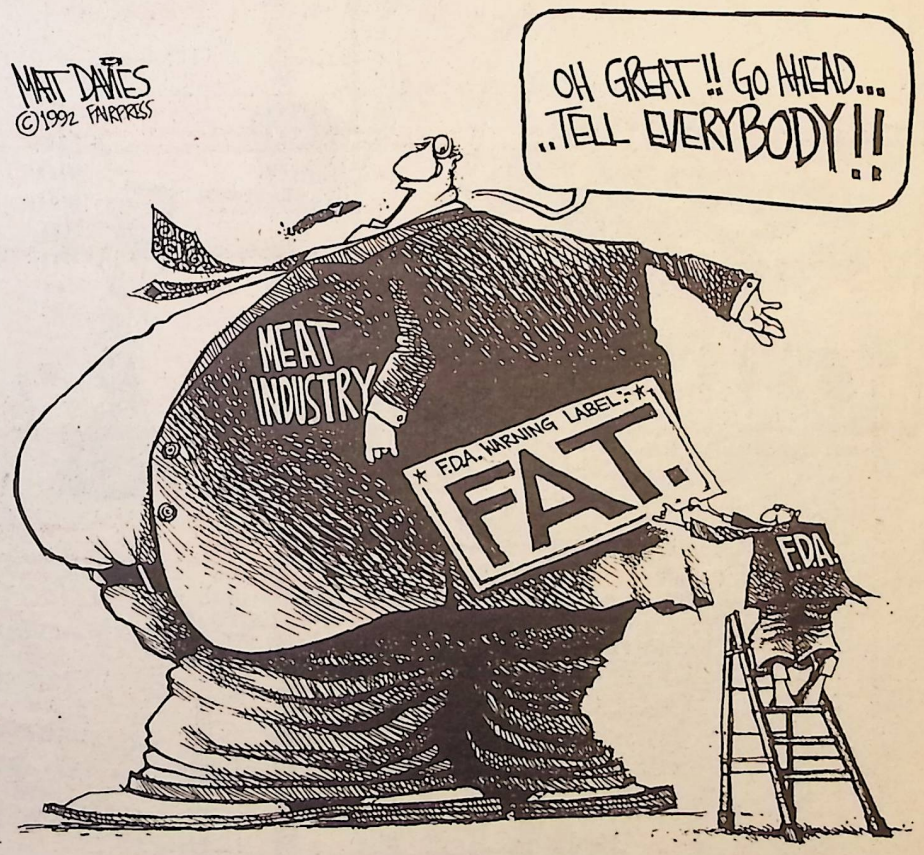

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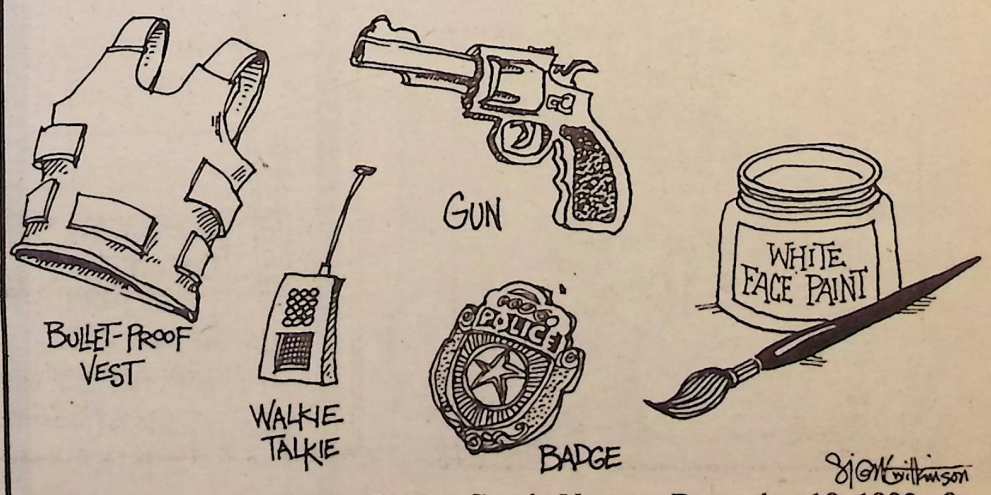

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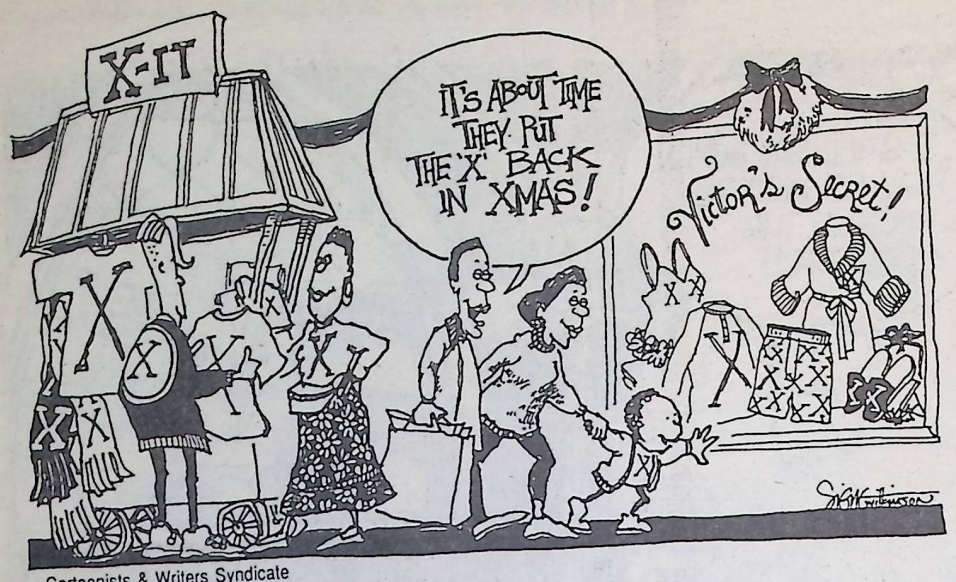

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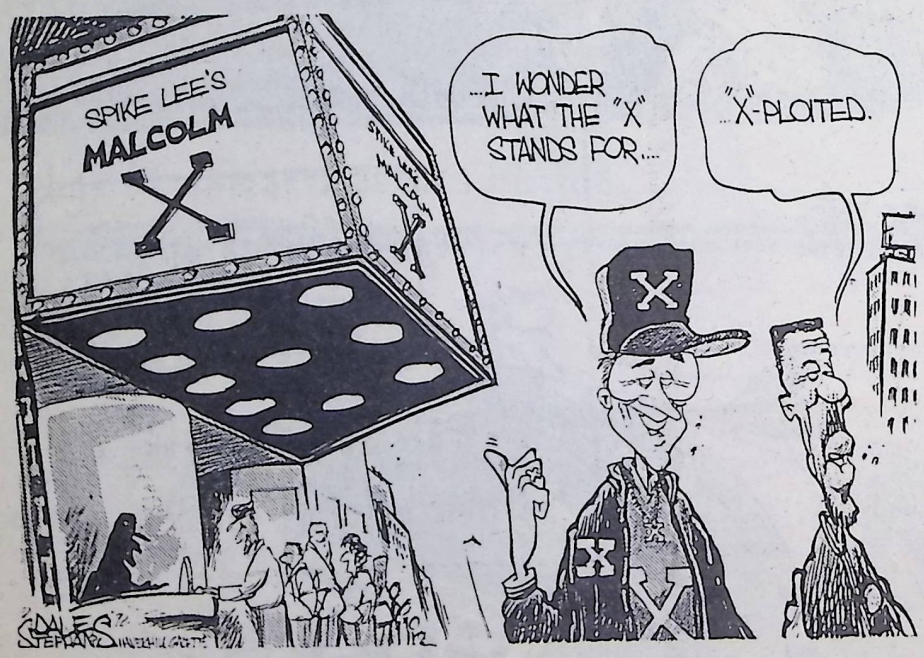

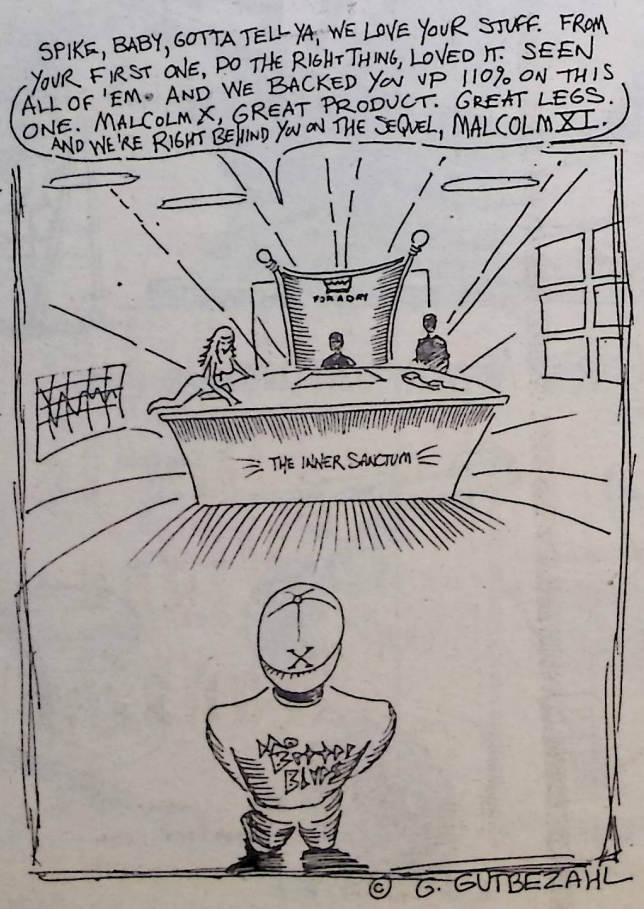

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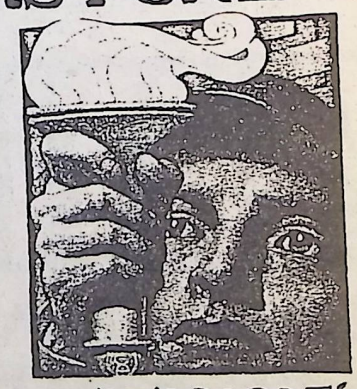

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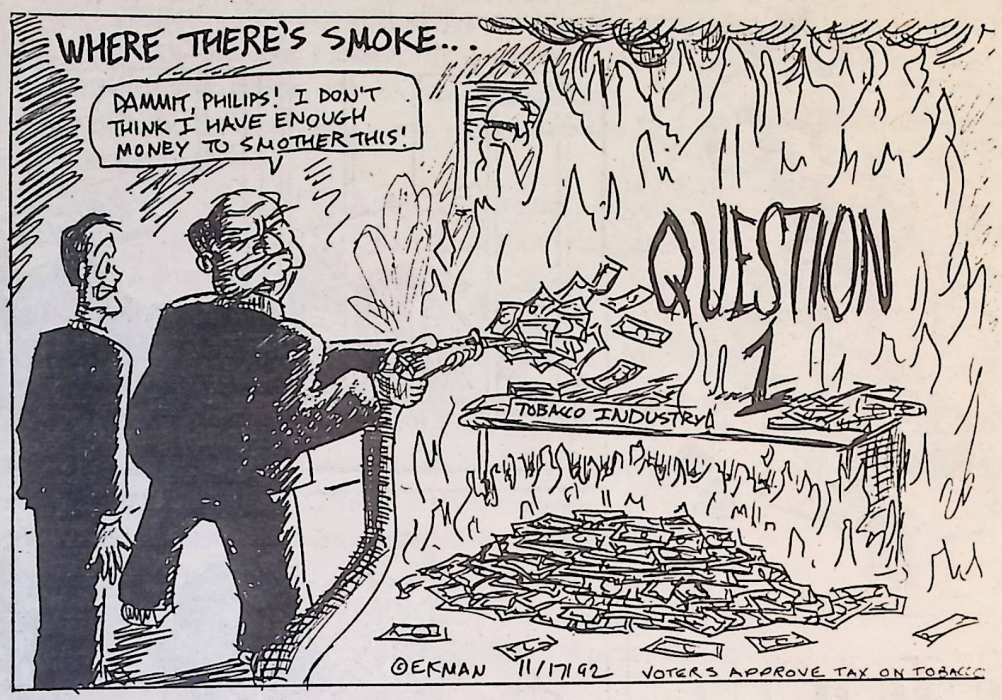

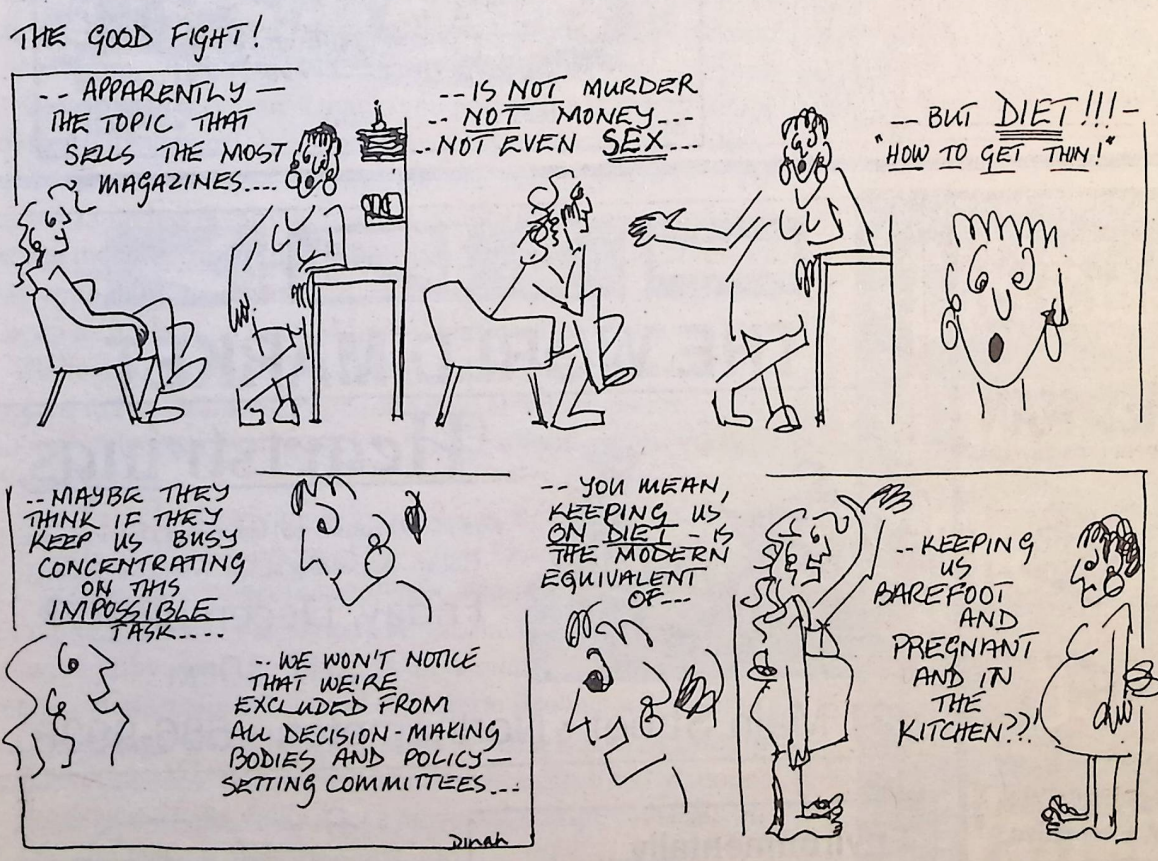

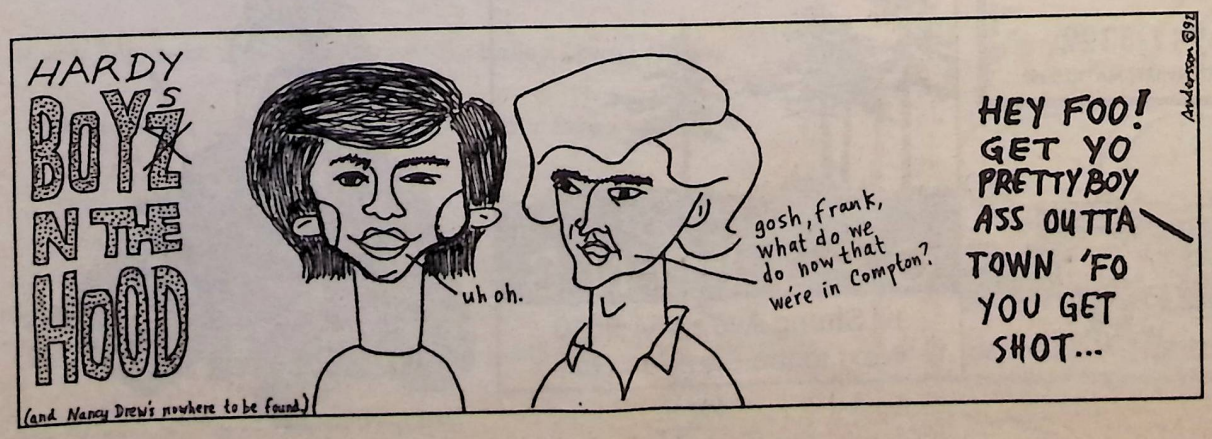

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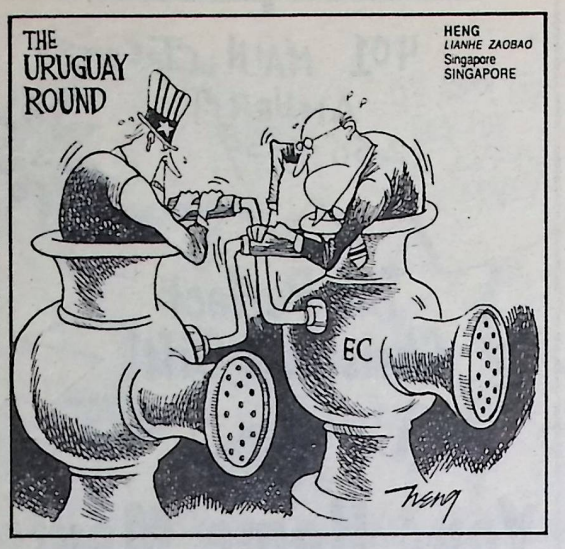

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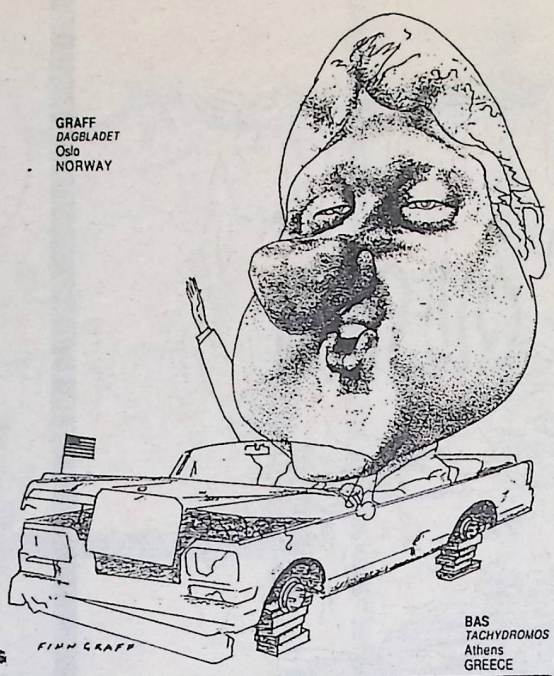

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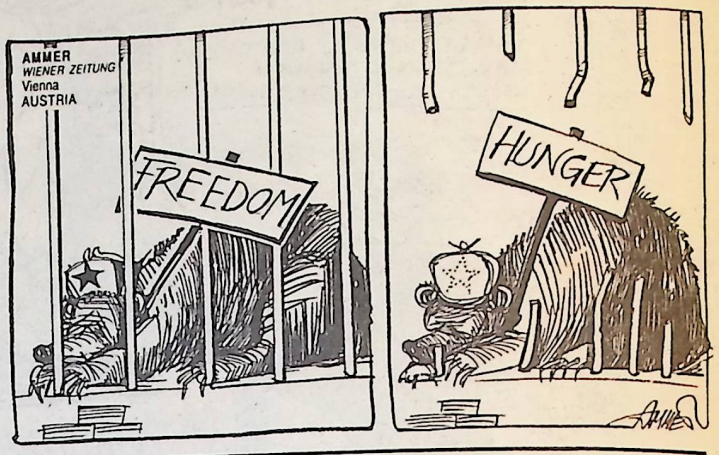

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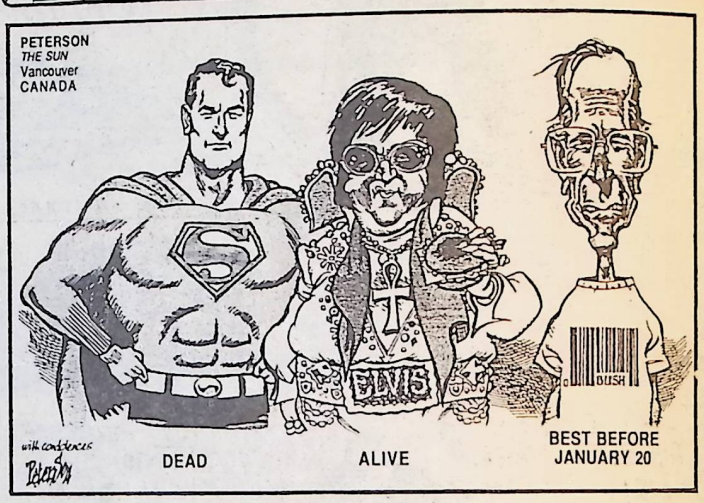

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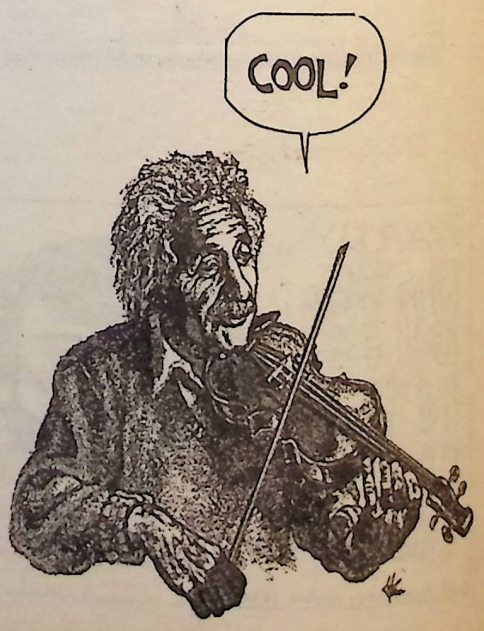

THE "C" WORD FOR XMAS — by Teresa M. Truitt

Only twenty or so shopping days left before the Big Gimmie Day, Day of Cosmic Booty, the Spiritual Shakedown. If you're fairly broke this year, don't despair. You can still give a meaningful gift without spending even half the rent money. It'll require a small investment and a little investigation of medical wholesalers, but believe me, it'll be worth the effort for that warm glow of satisfaction from all the people on your gift list.

I'm talking about the "C" word for Xmas: not Condors (endangered); not Condominiums (devalued).... I'm talking 'bout *condoms*. Yeah, babe. I'm getting a gross of 'em and stuffing my UNICEF cards with at least one per address.

Think of it! Could any gift be more appreciated? More needed? More fun?? Imagine the delight on Aunt Irma's face when she slits open your card, using her battery-operated, Jingle Bells-playing, red-and-white Santa Claus letter opener: "Dashing through the snow, la la la la, huh...what's this? AAUGHH!!!"

Or when your boss opens your card at the office party and Mr.-Glow-In-The-Dark pops out like a Jack-in-the-box? Can't you just see his reaction? "Why, thank you for this lovely UNICEF card, the profits from which will go to starving and lonely children all over the world, dear Employee. You shouldn't ha—AAUGHH!!"

This year I'm sending a card to the President and his Missus — why the heck not? I can forgive and forget; after all, it's Xmas. The Secret Service probably opens his cards, though. That could be interesting: "Stand back, there's something in this card!" Blam! Blam! "Hmmm, 'Electronically Quality-Control Tested — Finest Latex.' Have a secretary send a thank-you note to the taxpayer for the gift enclosed with the card. We'd better test this to make sure it's safe."

My favorite teenaged nephews and nieces will get gift-packs of ten each — youth has no problem with quantity discounts. And can't you just see the tree, trimmed to a fare-thee-well with those silver and gold foil-wrapped little squares, glimmering by the light of the color wheel lamp as it plays on your Mom's favorite white plastic tree?

I'll have to make sure I mail early before the overseas crush so that my card to His Holiness, Pope John Paul II will be on time. That one will probably get a twelve-pack — a little something for the boys in the Swiss Guard.

While I'm in the giving spirit of Xmas, maybe I could send a special CARE package to some of my other favorite public figures. Justice Clarence Thomas gets natural-skin cola-flavored condoms for safe sexual harassment. For Woody Allen, the Guilt Crisis condom, printed with pithy sayings, like *"What would her mother say?"* Girlfriend-beater/sensitive folk-rocker Jackson Browne will receive a condom big enough for his head. And for Warren Beatty, a Lifetime Achievement Condom. If he doesn't want it, he can give it to Madonna.

So, deck the halls, folks. Get a move on! Put the "C" back into Xmas. Oh, and leave a pack for Santa, too.

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JOE BOB BRIGGS

You know how you can turn on the Court TV channel, thinking "Here's something I'll watch for five, ten minutes before I go to work," and then *fourteen hours later* you're *still watching?*

You've been fired from your job. Your relatives are looking into committing you to the mental hospital. (Of course, when you find out about this, your first thought is, "I hope they send Fred Graham to cover the hearing.") But *you don't care.* Because you have just *got* to find out if the jury will vote for second-degree murder or let the guy go.

I used to think ESPN was the most addictive television network ever invented, especially during college basketball season when you can turn it on any time during the day or night, and there will be 15,000 seriously deranged people jumping up and down like epileptic monkeys after every shot. You don't even know who's *playing*, and you watch that.

But that was nothing compared to Court TV. They average three or four life-or-death verdicts a day (or at least prison-or-freedom verdicts). And I can *never* stand that moment when the jury comes back with the verdict, and it seems like an *eternity* before they get all the legal language read properly, and the verdict checked over by the judge — and then one or two words, and *boom*, it's over. When it's "Guilty," I've noticed that the bailiffs always slap the cuffs on the guy immediately. Usually the defendant is in mental outer space. He didn't expect it to be so slow, and then, when it happened, he didn't expect it to be so *quick*. Sometimes they don't even seem to realize they're *being* handcuffed.

Anyhow, this network is dangerous. I would imagine that people are starting to have it blocked off their cable just so they can get some sleep.

I wrote a column about Court TV during its first month on the air — about a year and a half ago, when everyone was claiming it would *destroy* the court system — and now, after a steady diet of famous and not-so-famous-cases, it's actually done the opposite. Maybe it's the way Fred Graham and Cynthia McFadden and the other anchors report the cases, but it's become almost a shrine to the wisdom of the legal system. These people *revere* lawyers and courts and judges and things legal.

But there's one part of Court TV that really scares me, and probably does more to destroy the image of the courts as being fair than anything else they do. Every afternoon Court TV has a call-in show, usually hosted by Cynthia McFadden and a guest lawyer, and they take calls pertaining to that day's case.

Most of the time, the callers have *obviously* watched the entire trial, because they know every minute detail of the testimony. But here's the scary part: They've all reached a verdict!

Even if the trial is gonna run three weeks, and they've only been watching three *days*, they already know who's innocent, who's guilty, who's lying, who's telling the truth, and what should happen now. They'll say things like, "There's no way this fellow could be a murderer," or, more often, "He should definitely get the death penalty for what he did" — and, of course, this is before anyone has *proved anything* about what he did. Sometimes they'll even suggest *additional people who should be prosecuted.*

Whenever I watch these phone calls, I think, "That person could have been on the jury." Jury selection is a fairly random process. *Any* of these people can end up on a jury. And, after all, they do have a right to have opinions about the case, simply because they *watch* the whole case. But it's the way they have *moral opinions* about what's usually just a question of deciding what the facts are.

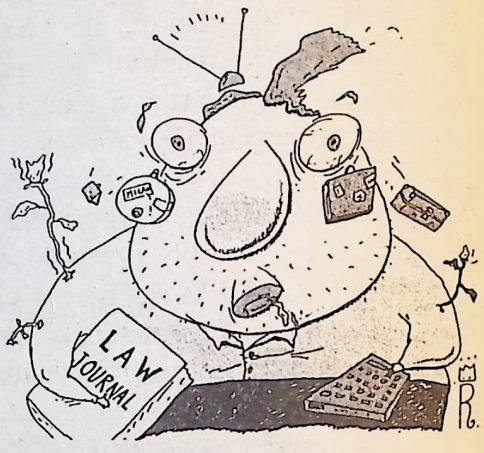
Up until now, I always thought juries were fair. I really did believe that. But, if you watch this long enough, you'll decide that juries probably *aren't* fair.

Goldang that Court TV — making me think again.

Excuse me, I gotta go get some rest.

• • •

"Iron Joe Bob," Joe Bob's long-awaited book claiming his rightful place as the leader of the Men's Movement, is now available from Atlantic Monthly Press. To discuss the meaning of life with Joe Bob, or to get his world-famous newsletter, write Joe Bob Briggs, PO Box 2002, Dallas, TX 75221. Joe Bob's fax line is always open: 214-368-2310. **COPYRIGHT CREATORS SYNDICATE, INC.**



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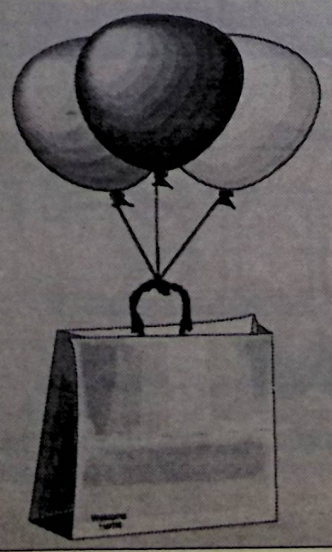

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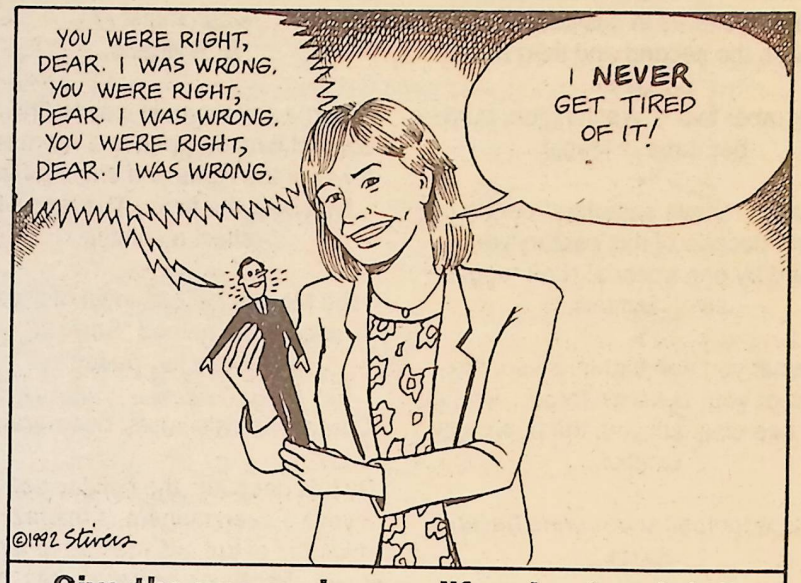
SEASONINGS



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"OH, AND I SUPPOSE THE LITTLE TYKE'LL GET HOURS OF ENJOYMENT OUTA YOUR FRANKINCENSE AND MYRRH!"

TAKE IT OR LEAVE IT by L.M. Boyd

Q. I know "Park" is the most popular name for streets in this country, but what's the second and third most popular?
A. Number two is Washington; number three is Maple.

•

The term "female secretary" during the first decade of this century was dubbed by one editorialist as "aggressively feminist."

•

If what you see frightens you, the pupils of your eyes get larger. If what you see disgusts you, the pupils get smaller.

•

The first football shoes were baseball spikes.

•

It's specifically against the law in Wichita, Kansas, for a father to brandish a gun in the presence of his daughter's boyfriend.

•

Rhode Island was named for the Greek Island of Rhodes.

•

Lab researchers think the mouse population is about equally divided — half right-pawed and half left-pawed.

•

Q. What's the technical name for this slash mark: /?
A. A virgule.

•

Some say the best way to find a contact lens dropped in a room is to turn out the lights and shine a flashlight over the floor. The lens will reflect a sparkle.

•

The Massachusetts town of Salem used to be named "Shalom" — Hebrew for "peace."

•

Comanches also used boomerangs.

•

By this deep into the holiday season, you've seen numerous magazine pictures of turkeys roasted to a rich brown. For those camera shots, many — possibly most — of those turkeys were pointed with shoe polish.

•

You can't yawn while you sleep.

•

For the origin of "a drop in the bucket," check out Isaiah 40:15 in the King James bible.

•

An old law in London, England, makes it illegal to kiss in a motion picture theater.

•

Q. How do people generally meet the person they are going to marry?
A. Eighteen percent meet in restaurants. Forty-four percent meet at work. Eleven percent meet in the homes of friends.

•

The original name of the shopping cart was "food taxi."

•

You and I in noting directions say "northeast" or "southwest." The Japanese say the equivalent of "east-north" or "west-south."

•

A traffic law in Israel's Negev requires camels to wear reflectors tied to their knees.

•

All rattlesnakes swim well.

•

Fred Barnard of the Street Railways Advertising Company wrote an article for *Printer's Ink* magazine in 1921. A phrase he created in it has been accredited to dozens of others. It was: "One picture is worth a thousand words."

•

Left-handers are barred from the game of polo.

•

Q. In the oldtime general stores, cloth was called "dry goods," presumably because it was dry. What were "wet goods," if anything?
A. Rum. Lot of early stores were run by New England merchant shippers. Their main cargoes were calico and rum. They put the cloth on one side of the store and the rum on the other.

•

Sharks don't kill as many people every year as barnyard pigs do.

•

Country club record keepers say upkeep of just one golf hole costs an average of about $25,000 a year.

•

It's known that unnoticed sounds pitched too low for the ear to recognize still can make people sad.

•

Those who examine fossils say mosquitoes haven't changed in 40 million years.

•

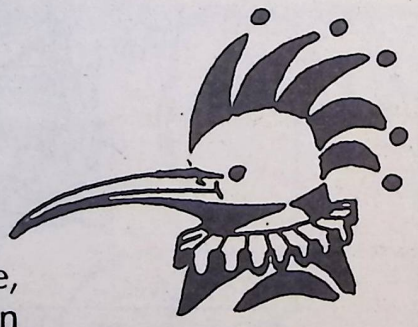
Wedding guests in Morocco throw raisins.

•

Q. It's now known that men go to the supermarket more frequently than women do. Why?
A. More women than men make lists.

•

From England
Hoopoe
The Clowne



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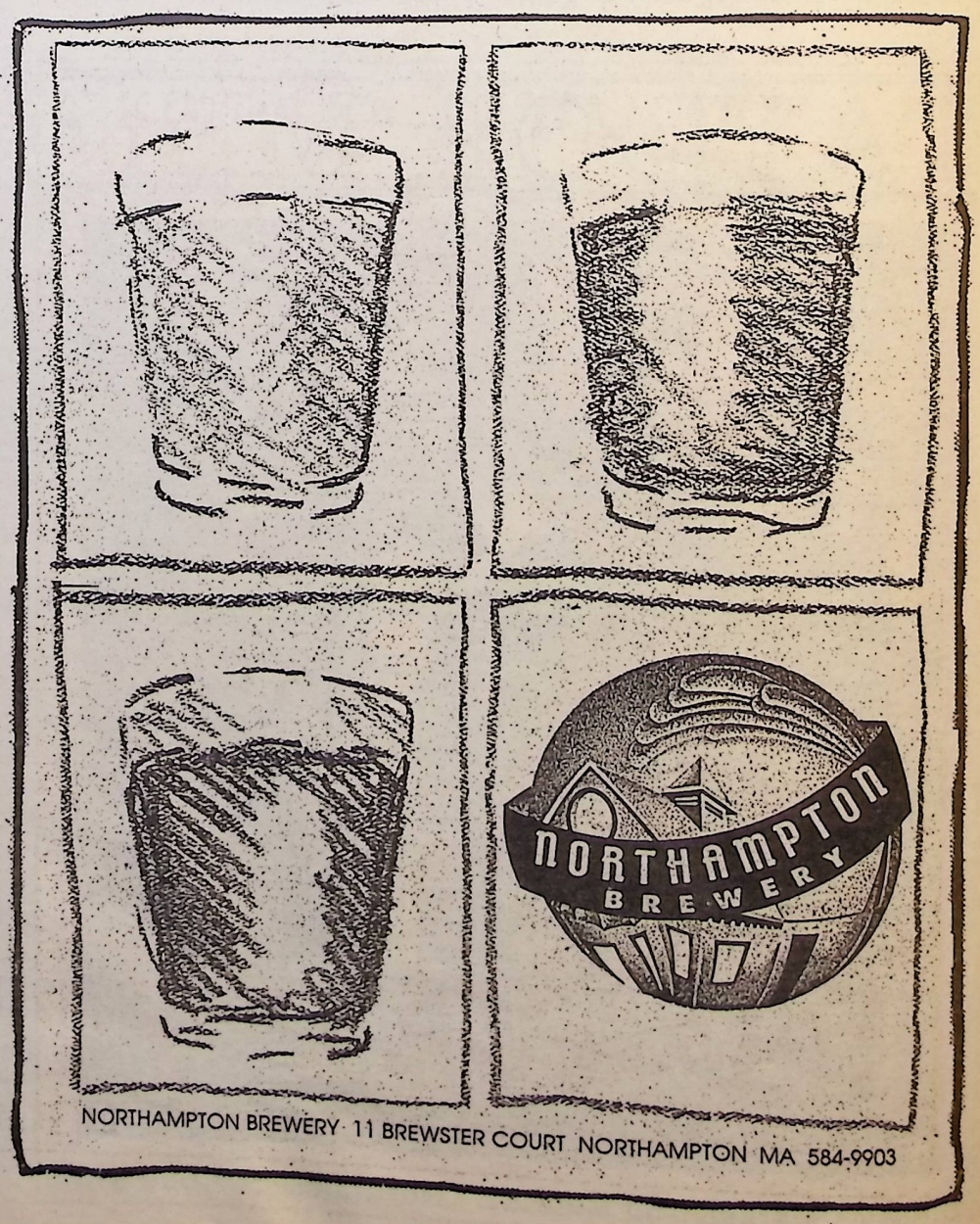
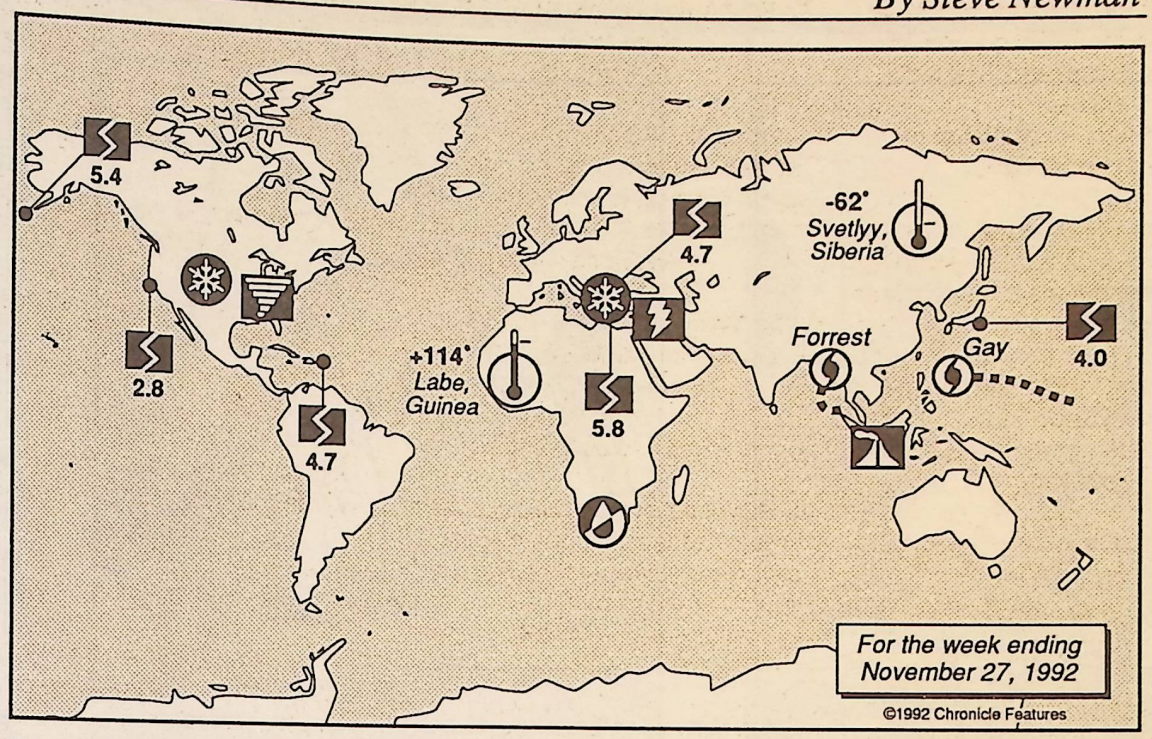


EARTHWEEK: A DIARY OF THE PLANET

By Steve Newman



Twisters

A string of rare late-autumn tornadoes ravaged parts of 12 states from Texas to North Carolina during a weekend of terrifying severe weather. At least 25 people were killed by the storms, including three Cub Scout buddies who were staying up late during a weekend sleep-over when a twister demolished their host's house. In Florence, Miss., a six-day-old baby girl was ripped from her father's arms by a twister and flung into the night. She was found safe but for a few scratches following a 40-minute search through the darkness. Insurance industry officials expect the damage across the region to exceed $100 million.

Tropical Storms

Nearly 5,000 people in the Marshall Islands lost their homes and a third of the territory was declared a disaster area after typhoon Gay struck the northern part of the island chain. Government officials in Majuro said that none of the houses on Wotho Atoll was left standing after the storm passed. The center of Gay later went directly over Guam, packing winds of 120 miles per hour, but the island was spared any significant damage.

A regenerated tropical cyclone Forrest killed five people as it lashed southern Bangladesh. Early warning from the government weather office allowed officials to evacuate most coastal residents threatened by the storm.

Volcano Warning

A government geologist in Indonesia warned that the volcano of Mount Slamet in central Java is entering a dangerous stage and could erupt at any time, according to a report in the *Jakarta Post*. The mountain is one of the most active in the country and last erupted in 1988.

Nearby Krakatoa Volcano showed no further signs of activity.

Early Winter

A sprawling storm that unleashed the season's first blizzard on the front range of the Rocky Mountains rode into parts of Texas, Oklahoma, and Kansas on howling winds and sub-freezing cold. Most flights in the region's airports were canceled on the eve of the most heavily traveled holiday period of the year. Large stretches of interstate highway were closed due to the blinding snow which blew into drifts three feet high.

Heavy snowfall in the mountains of eastern and northern Turkey cut off nearly 2,500 villages from the outside world, the Anadolu news agency reported. Worst hit were locations along the Black Sea coast in Ordu and Zonguldak provinces. The storm later swept across the Middle East, flooding streets in Israel and bring the season's first snowfall to Mount Hermon, the country's highest point and only skiing region.

Drought's End

Recent rains across southern Africa may be the beginning of the end of the worst drought in living memory. Meteorologists say that the timely onset of the rainy season during November should mean that the precipitation will spread northward during the next few months. The recent drought has been so severe that it will take months of good, solid rainfall to begin to replenish depleted ground-water supplies.

Earthquakes

A strong quake centered west of the Mediterranean island of Crete rattled windows at dawn in the Cretan town of Khania and awakened residents of Athens more than 80 miles from the epicenter. Puerto Rico was soundly rocked by three tremors generated by an undersea fault zone in the Puerto Rican Trench. Earth movements were also felt in Romania and Bulgaria, eastern Japan, the Aleutian Islands, and the San Francisco Bay Area.

The Pelican Excuse

Israel's state-owned electricity corporation attempted to calm angry customers with a new justification for the power failures which affected thousands of homes during the first cold spell of autumn. The *Yediot Ahranot* daily reported that the corporation claims that thousands of migrating pelicans are for the first time feeding at fish ponds near two major power stations. When the wet pelicans perched on nearby power lines, they caused massive short circuits, electrocuting themselves and plunging thousands of homes into darkness, the paper said.

Additional Sources: *British Meteorological Office, U. S. Climate Analysis Center, U. S. Earthquake Information Center, U.S. Military Joint Typhoon Warning Center at Guam, and the World Meteorological Organization.*

THE FAR SIDE

By Gary Larson

"In this dramatic turn of events, testimony against Mr. Pumpkineater is about to be given by his sister, Jeannie Jeannie Eatszucchini."

For a very brief period, medieval scientists were known to have dabbled in the merits of cardboard armor.

"Sheriff! Ben Wiggins is ridin' into town, and he's wearin' that same little chiffon number that he wore when he shot Jake Sutton!"

house

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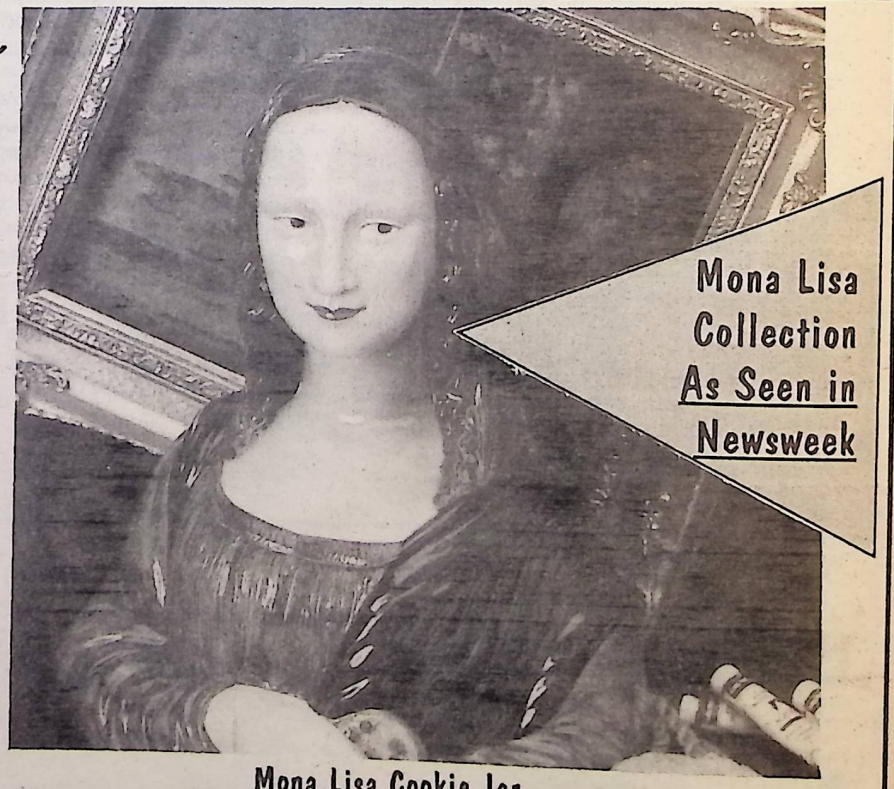

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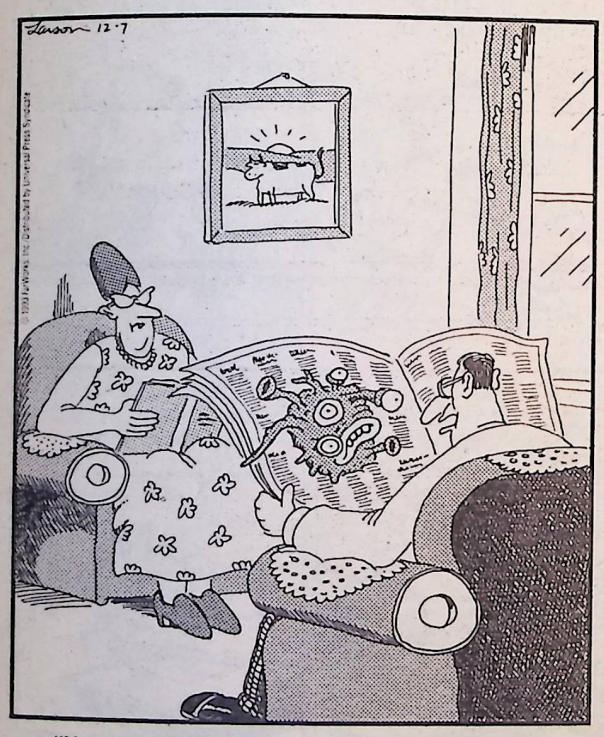
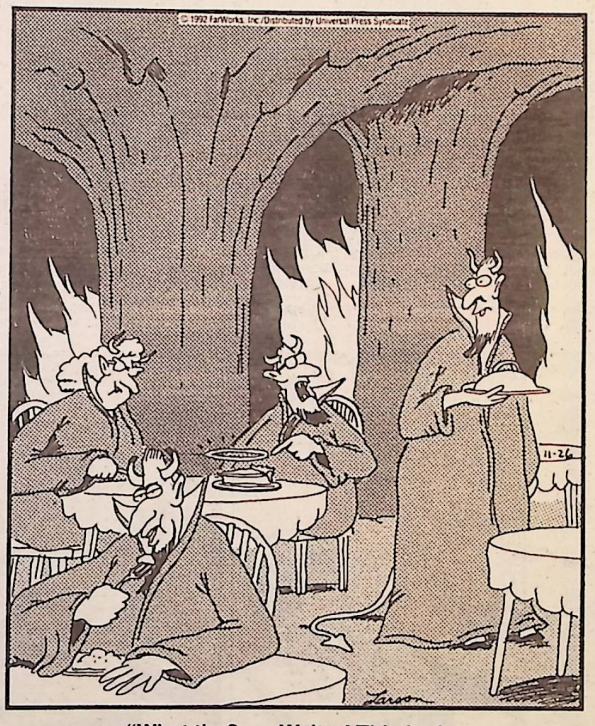
"Indians!"

For several hours, confusion reigned.

Early plumbers



"Hey, Lola. Did you see this thing in the paper?"



"What the? . . . Waiter! This looks like a little slice of heaven!"

Pickpockets of the Rue Morgue

Later, Edna was forced to sell her brussels sprout house.

"Be patient, Leona, be patient. . . . Zebras won't take a drink until they know it's absolutely safe."

LEOLD at 15

by ROGER SALLOOM

When my cousin Wes was 10 he would go to the amusement park to spend the day. Over the big p.a. system he'd hear:

"WES, PLEASE GO TO THE KILLER LOOP."

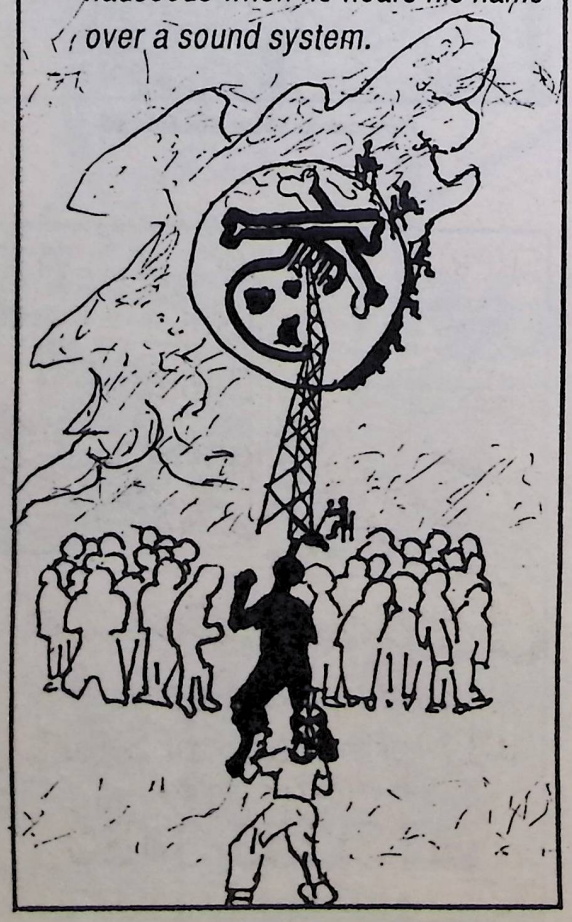
Little Wes would get excited and run over to the Killer Loop, and stand there looking all around not knowing what to do. But he would always see somebody vomiting, or just finished vomiting. No one would say anything to him. He'd wander away.

He never knew why they were calling him. This would happen 3 or 4 times a day!

This went on for years... every summer when he'd go to the park. Wes would run over to the Killer Loop when they called his name.

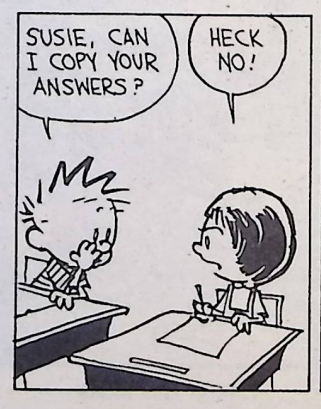
After Wes grew up, we all found out that the chief custodian at the park was also named Wes.

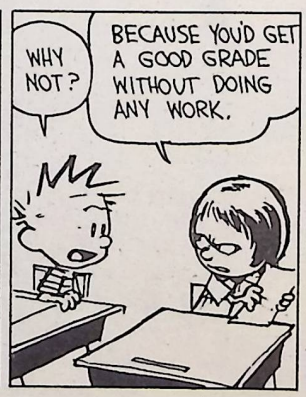
To this day Wes still gets nauseous when he hears his name over a sound system.

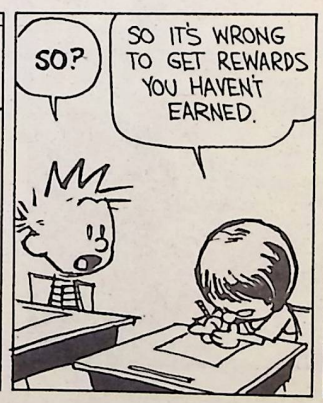


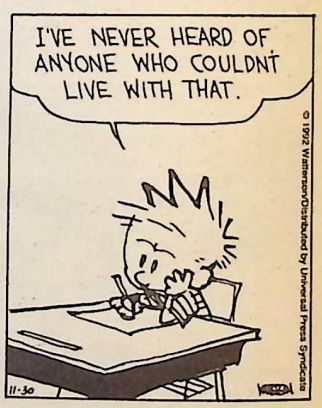
Calvin and Hobbes

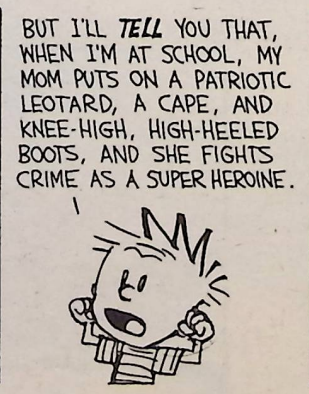
by Bill Watterson

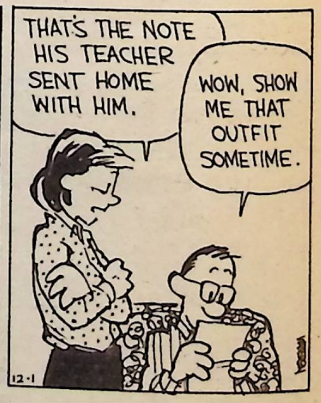


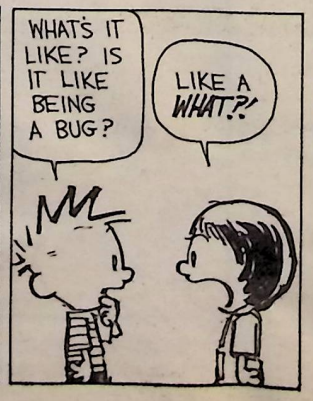


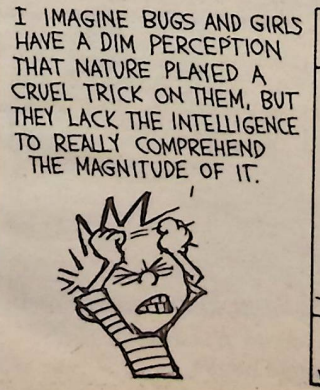


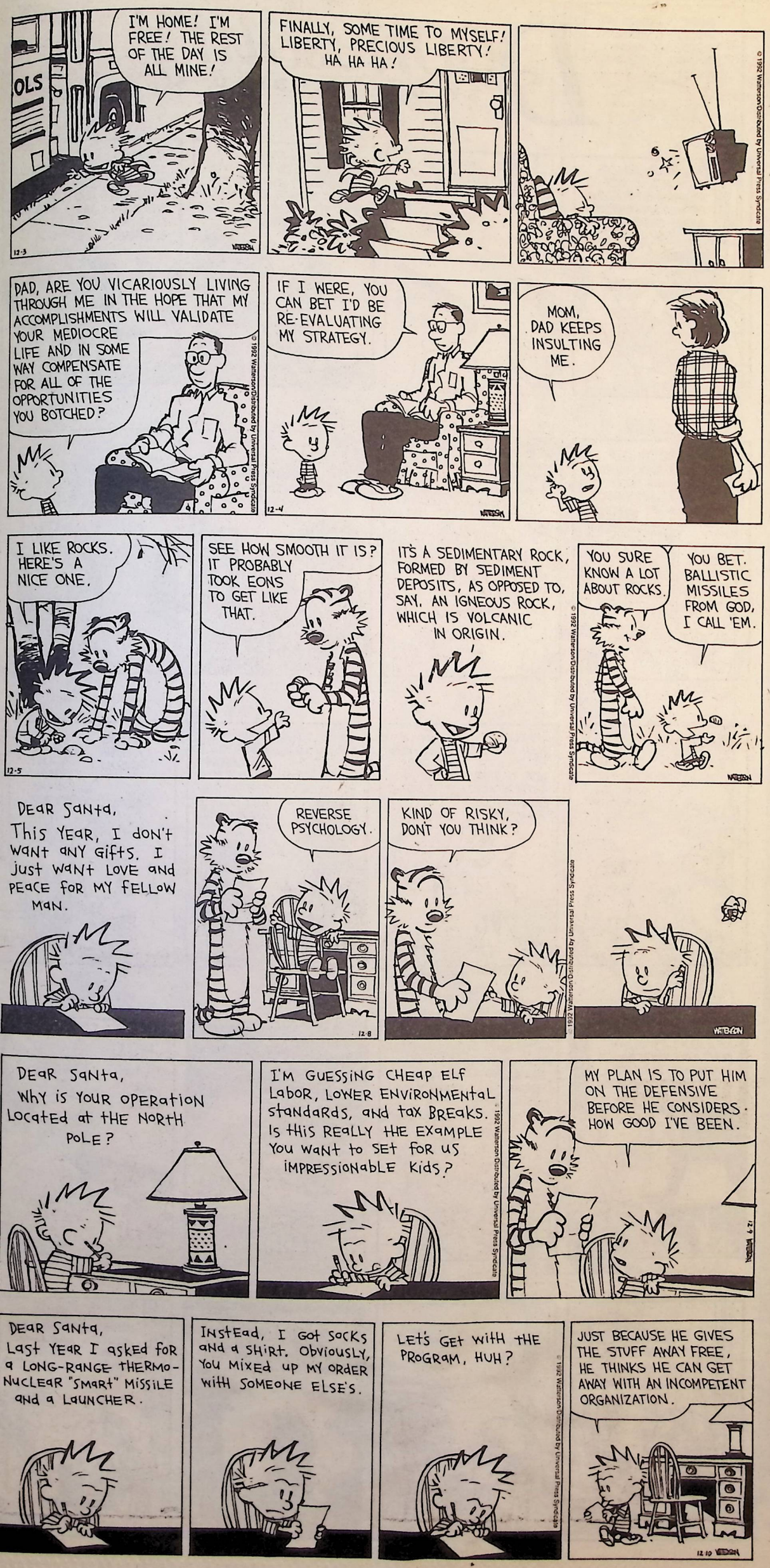












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humor me

by Izzy Gesell

It's time to plan for New Year's resolutions. I'm going to try and be more organized because, as I take stock of my existence, I realize my trash is the most orderly part of my life.

I never gave garbage much thought as I was growing up in Brooklyn. All we had to do was bring the stuff downstairs and put it into one of the large metal cans in front of the house. Household waste was taken away, seemingly free of charge, by uniformed members of the NYC Department of Sanitation. Even as a young child, I recognized the power of words to sanitize truth. People who worked for the Department of Sanitation were garbage men, plain and simple. The vehicles that carried them were garbage trucks, which may have been pristine white when new, but on the street were as unsanitary as Pee Wee Herman's fondest dreams. Emblazoned on these trucks was the department insignia depicting a loin-clothed Native American and a Pilgrim-hatted colonist heaving rotten fruit at each other.

The morning of a pick-up found the metal cans lined up orderly and respectful, like parochial school kids during a fire drill. On top of each can was its cover, chained to the fence to discourage the neighborhood kids from engaging in the urban equivalent of putting a penny onto the railroad tracks. Peering down the street after the garbage had been collected was like looking at a trailer park in the wake of a tornado. The metal cans were tossed hither and yon onto the sidewalk, a testament to the disdain the workers had for the receptacles and the people who filled them. The covers dangled from their chains, suggesting some kind of industrial decapitation.

As a grown-up, I moved into an incinerator building in Manhattan. No, this doesn't mean the structure was prone to fire. It's a term meant to characterize a residence at least one rung up the ladder of the American Dream from the tenement so many immigrants first lived in. It was a sign of prosperity to live in a building that burned its own waste rather than have to manually lug garbage to the street. The luxury lay in being able to step out of your apartment, shuffle a few steps down the hall, open a chute and send your garbage to an ashy fate. The challenge was to keep yourself from being locked out of the apartment.

Living in Northampton, I have come full circle and rejoined my ancestors in a common tradition. Once again I bring my trash outside. However, I don't take it out to the curb. I take it out to the car, get in and drive to the recycling center. I am sure my dear departed grandmother would question the progress of civilization if she knew I was taking my rubbish for a ride just to throw it away.

Not only do I escort it to the dump and pay a cover charge for the privilege, I have to separate out paper, aluminum, glass and an ever-changing array of plastic containers. Here's my recycling setup: A cardboard box for newspapers, magazines, inserts, junk mail and letters; a bin for cans, aluminum and glass; a bucket for plastic jugs; a bag for plastic bottles with #1 on them; a bag for plastic bottles with # 2 on them; a sack for returnable bottles; a plastic bag for other plastic bags; a pail for compost; and a garbage can. At times, I resemble a mail sorter on a lazy Susan.

Although I understand the reason for recycling, I don't feel comfortable with it. It's one mindset to drink soda from recycled cans; it's entirely different to use 100% post-consumer-waste toilet paper.

Let's not forget that much of the physical expansion of America was accomplished by using landfill made from refuse. When you are in NYC, visit Battery Park City at the foot of Manhattan or Co-op City in the Bronx. Each community was built on a foundation formed by the residue of excess. What progress can we expect from the Age of Recycling? We can't even write legibly on recycled paper, much less build neighborhoods on it.

As long as I am required to sort things, the government could extend the concept to other mundane areas of life. I could use some help with my laundry. I'm always mixing the whites and coloreds.

Doonesbury

BY G.B. TRUDEAU

PARTY CLOTHES ● GREAT PRICES ● EASY EXCHANGES ● T-POTS ● CHOPSTICKS ● RUGS & TAPESTRIES ● DATE BOOKS ● PENDANTS ● LOCKETS ● BRACELETS ● RINGS ● SCARVES ● CHINESE HEALTH BALLS ● HAPPY HANUKKAH ● MERRY CHRISTMAS ● SOLSTICE GREETINGS ● HAPPY KWANZA ● HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO THE EMPEROR, BEETHOVEN, JEANNE & TIMOTHY

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